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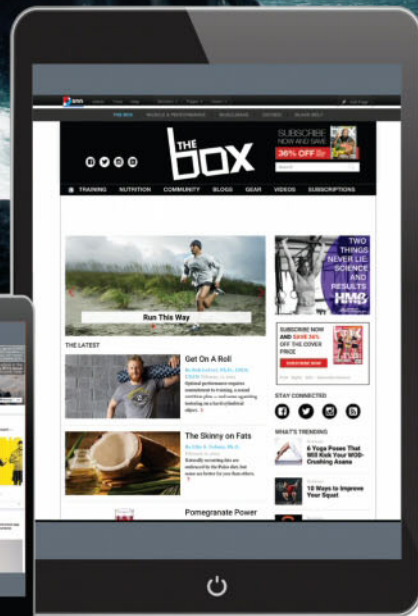
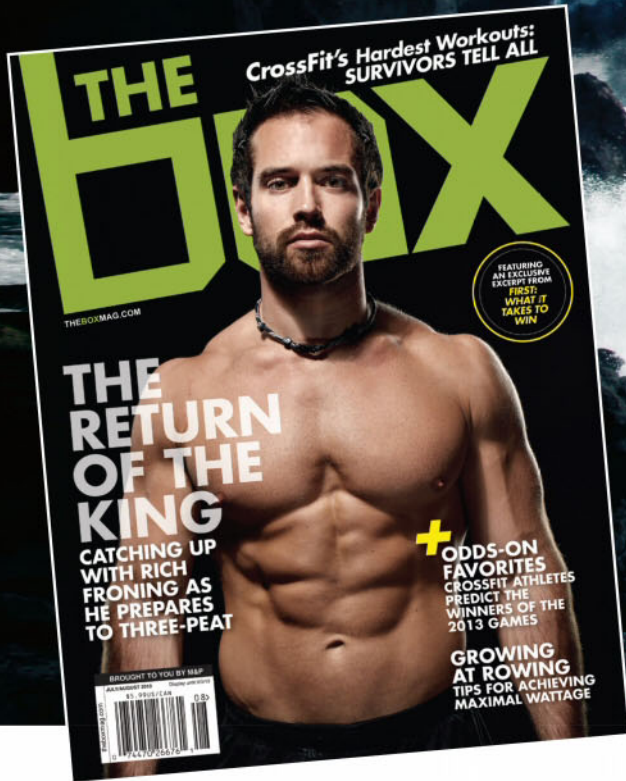
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AS A CROSSFITTER, YOU KNOW THAT THIS LIFESTYLE IS RICH IN FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS AND LABOR-DRIVEN PRACTICES. HECK, IN CROSSFIT EVEN THE MOST GLAMOROUS MOMENTS COME WITH ENOUGH PAIN AND SUFFERING TO FILTER OUT ANY HALFHEARTED PRACTITIONERS. IT'S A LABOR OF LOVE.

To a baseball player, the routine is familiar. CrossFit, like baseball, has that unique every-damn-day quality about it. Though the training and the athleticism of other major sports, like football and basketball, are surely remarkable, it's almost as if they have a little too much *Friday Night Lights* and too little "Let's play two" to them to connect with CrossFit the way baseball does.

In fact, since my baseball career ended, I haven't experienced a more tightly woven existence between life and the "thing" than I have with CrossFit. It's those blurred lines day in and day out that I appreciate most. Plus, with 15.1 looming (at press time), I look at my hands and recognize them as being exactly as battered and calloused as they were when I was 10 years old taking 200 swings a night.

You've got to understand that to play a gentleman's game like baseball from city to city from night to night requires a great deal of soul-searching. All the conversations you have in your head in the middle of a two-for-20 slump are the exact same conversations we all have during "Helen."

"This sucks."

"Suck it up!"

"Who am I? What am I about?"

"Quit!"

"Don't quit!"

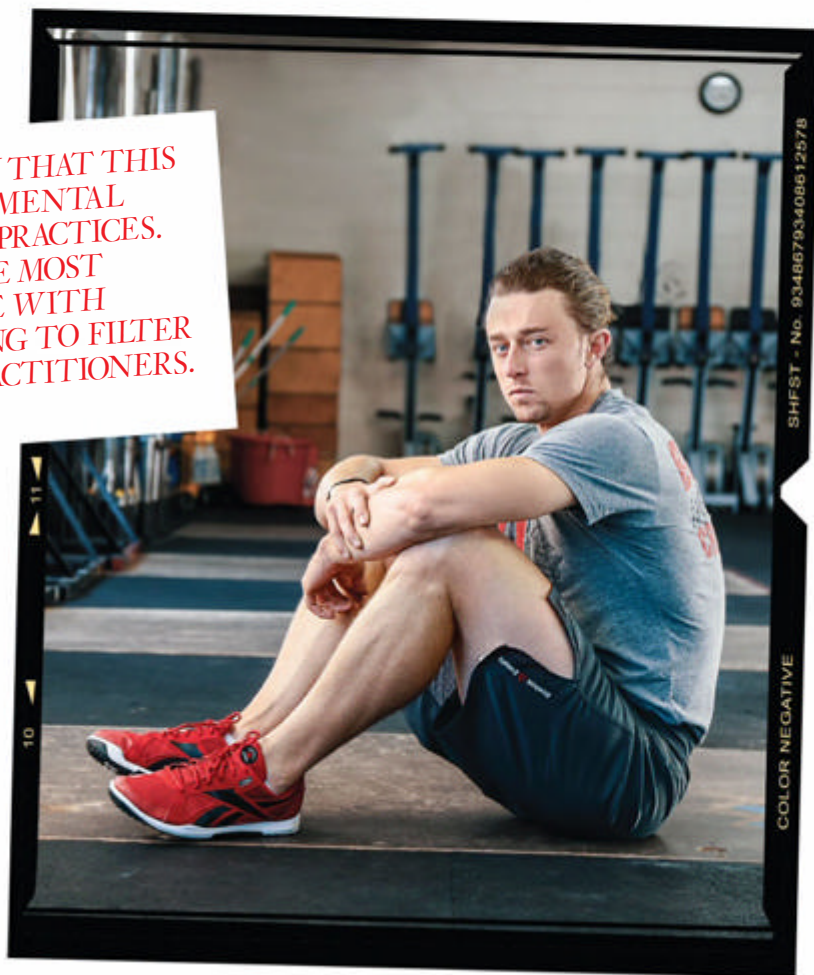
In baseball, like life, a man is the sum of his abilities over the course of a season or a lifetime. No ballplayer can rightfully

claim a four-for-four night at the plate as who they are. Anyone, after all, can have a good night. To be a good player, you've got to demonstrate this night after night with pitches in your wheelhouse and pitches that make you look silly.

CrossFit packs just as strong a dose of reality. You can't hide. The best have to demonstrate who they are week in and week out, year after year. That task in baseball, CrossFit and life only gets harder each day. After all, a sub-seven-minute "Helen" won't get you far if you don't have double-unders, right?

Everything is everything.

The beauty is that we are the sum of all our parts. That means strengths and weaknesses.



It's that honest, all-inclusive reality that I loved, hated, worked so hard for, cried over and dog-piled with throughout my baseball career. Thank goodness I get to wake up every damn day and get squared up with these tough-love lessons, with CrossFit picking up right where baseball left off. I used to get disappointed that not everyone could learn the lessons baseball taught me, but everyone can do CrossFit, and that's a damn blessing. □

— Logan Gelbrich
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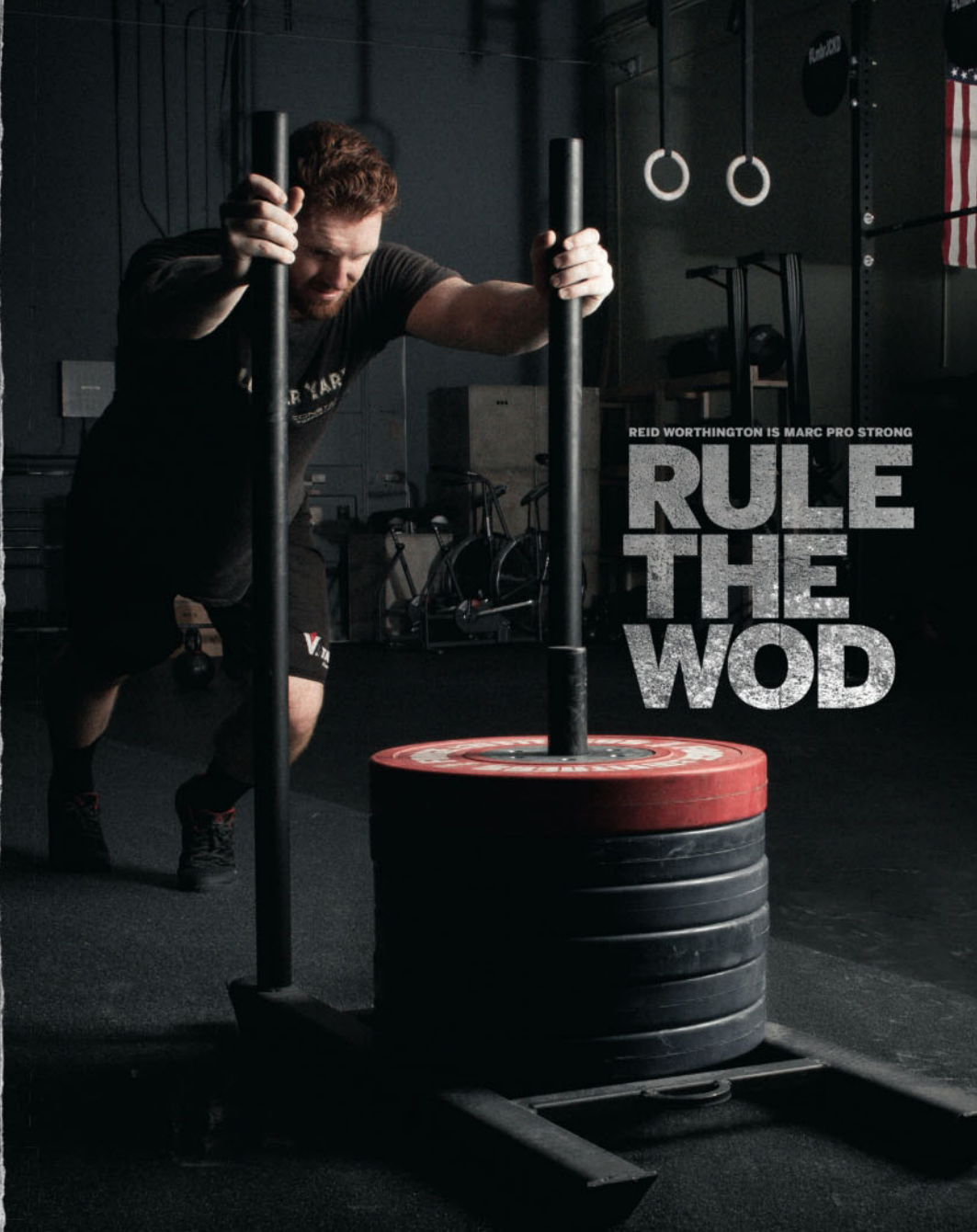
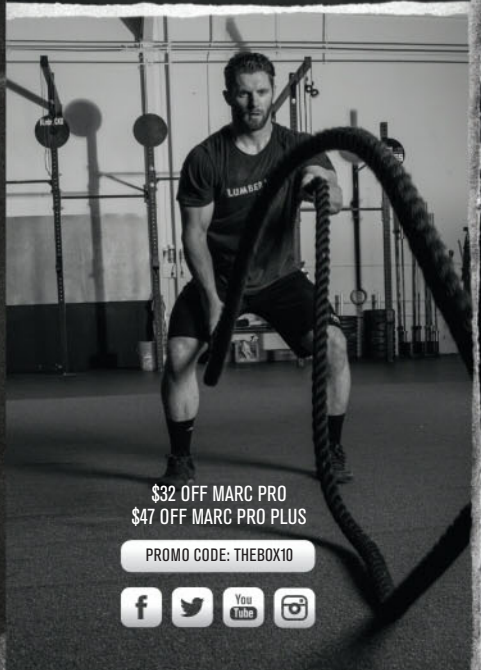
Why baseball players are hesitant to train overhead — and why CrossFitters shouldn't be. *By Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CFL-1*

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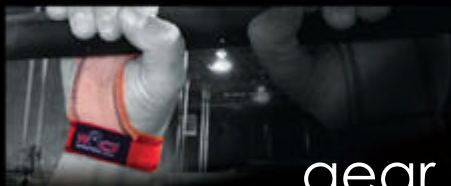
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BY JOE WUEBBEN

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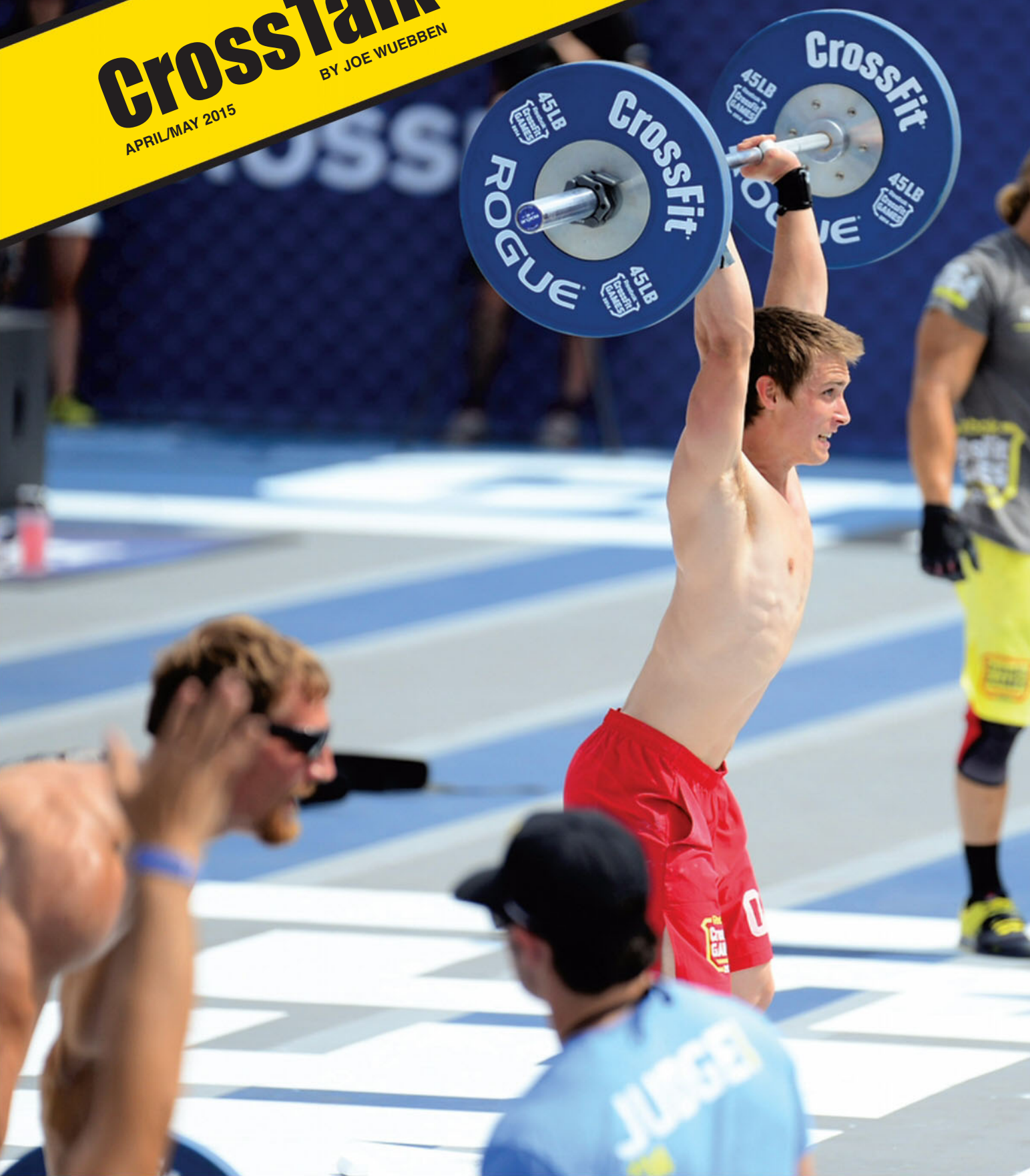




Photo Courtesy of CrossFit, Inc.

“There may be people who have more talent than you, but there’s no excuse for anyone to work harder than you do.”

— Derek Jeter,
Yankee Legend

PAIN RELIEF

Quick remedies for common CrossFit injuries with Brian Strump, DC

Q: I currently have shinsplints pretty bad because of lots of running. How can I make them go away without nixing the running completely?

A: Many times shinsplints are the result of “too much too soon,” in which the tissues of the lower legs aren’t prepared for the repetitive stresses placed on them. There’s no consensus on what causes the pain — theories include small tears of the leg muscles, inflammation of the tibia’s periosteum (a membrane that covers all bones), inflammation of the muscles or some combination of these.

Shinsplints can be difficult to deal with for a runner. Many times the individual should be instructed to stop running or limit the amount of miles for a given time while trying to heal. If the pain is only in one leg, treatment should include stretching the calf and Achilles. Myofascial release (golf ball on the bottom of the foot) may give relief, as well. If you’re suffering from shinsplints and have an affinity for sandals, I’d recommend passing on that kind of footwear for the time being. Generally speaking, footwear that doesn’t have a back strap or enclosed heel will usually require the toes to work more to grip the bottom of the shoe while walking, thus causing increased tension of the muscles on the bottom of the foot and back of the lower leg.

If you have shinsplints in both legs, you should direct your search to the hips and core. That’s a good rule of thumb for any non-traumatic pain that occurs bilaterally. In cases of bilateral shinsplints, it’s common to find the toe and/or foot extensors overworked as a result of a problem further up the kinetic chain. Myofascial release or stretching the tight, painful area may actually be counterintuitive and create more long-term problems despite the possible short-term reduction of symptoms.

Brian Strump, DC, is the owner of CrossFit Steele Creek (crossfitsteelecreek.com) and Premier Health & Rehab Solutions in Charlotte, North Carolina.

3.3

GRAMS

Decrease in average daily trans-fat intake (from 4.6 to 1.3 grams) among adults from the late 1990s to 2010, according to the Food and Drug Administration. This improvement is attributed mostly to trans-fat content being added to food labels in 2003.

TRANS FAT ON THE BRAIN

>> On top of being linked to higher LDL (bad) and lower HDL (good) cholesterol levels, trans fat also may wreck memory. A recent study presented at the American Heart Association’s Scientific Sessions 2014 in Chicago found that working-age male subjects (45 years old and younger) who reported consuming the most trans fat in their diets also scored lowest on a word-based memory test. Compared with men who reported eating the least amount of trans fat, the high-trans-fat consumers remembered roughly 10 percent fewer words on the quiz all subjects were given.

So basically, that could mean less brainpower for the guy who frequents the junk-food vending machine versus the one who snacks on healthier foods like raw almonds and fresh fruit. Who do you think is more likely to land that

next promotion? And while these results were specific to men, it’s safe to say trans fat won’t do women’s brains any favors, either.

TRANS TIP: According to the Food and Drug Administration, trans fat is commonly found in processed foods like crackers, cookies, cakes, pies, frozen pizzas, coffee creamers and refrigerated-dough products like biscuits and cinnamon rolls; steer clear of these items. Manufacturers are required to list trans-fat content on Nutrition Facts labels, but only when it totals more than 0.5 grams per serving. That means that even foods that claim to have zero trans fat can contain the bad stuff. To be sure you’re in the clear, look in the ingredients for the word “hydrogenated,” a sure sign that the product contains some trans fat.



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THE SWEET TALK ON SUGAR

Q: *Is all sugar created equal?*

A: In a word, no. Sugar is a general term for sweet-tasting short molecules of carbohydrates, most of which digest quickly. Glucose, the smallest possible molecule of sugar, happens to be the brain's main energy source — which goes a long way toward explaining why we experience sugar cravings. But glucose isn't the only form of sugar. It's not even the only form found in table sugar. Fructose, the other molecule in table sugar, is found naturally in fruit, but it differs from glucose in that it is broken down by the liver, which means it digests much more slowly. Certain popular "alternative" sweeteners, like agave and honey, contain greater ratios of fructose, which impacts not only their digestion rate but also (potentially) their impact on health. There's a reason why high-fructose corn syrup is under scrutiny, and that reason is its fructose content.

What is generally accepted is that increased sugar intake is associated with everything from diabetes to obesity, so limit total consumption. But if you must add a little sweetness to your coffee (or anything else), it doesn't matter whether you use white or brown sugar, honey, agave or even maple syrup, as long as you're only adding a little.

FIT LIST AIR AMERICA

>> How's the air quality in your town? Good enough to make you want to train outdoors — or not? The American Lung Association released its State of the Air 2014 report last year, ranking U.S. cities in "most polluted" or "cleanest" categories based on ozone and particle pollution levels. For complete rankings from the study and to learn more about the metrics, visit stateoftheair.org.

10 MOST POLLUTED U.S. CITIES BY OZONE:

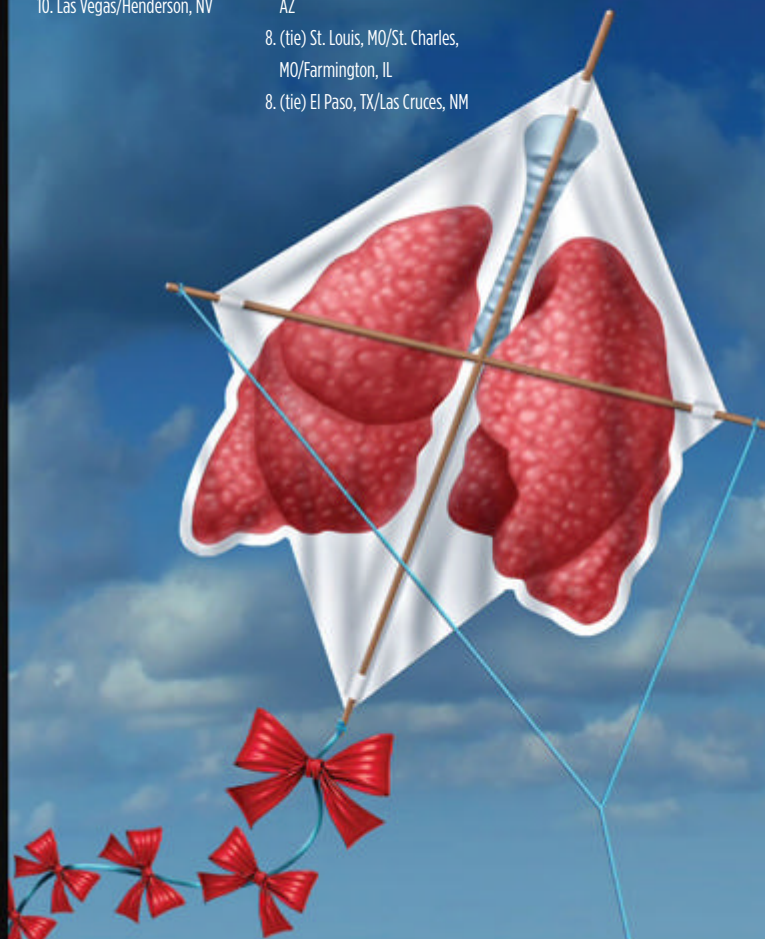
1. Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA
2. Visalia/Porterville/Hanford, CA
3. Bakersfield, CA
4. Fresno/Madera, CA
5. Sacramento/Roseville, CA
6. Houston/The Woodlands, TX
7. Modesto/Merced, CA
8. (tie) Washington, D.C./Baltimore, MD/Arlington, VA
8. (tie) Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
10. Las Vegas/Henderson, NV

10 MOST POLLUTED U.S. CITIES BY YEAR-ROUND PARTICLE POLLUTION:

1. Fresno/Madera, CA
2. Visalia/Porterville/Hanford, CA
3. Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA
3. Bakersfield, CA
5. Modesto/Merced, CA
6. Pittsburgh, PA/New Castle, OH/Weirton, WV
7. El Centro, CA
8. (tie) Phoenix/Mesa/Scottsdale, AZ
8. (tie) St. Louis, MO/St. Charles, MO/Farmington, IL
8. (tie) El Paso, TX/Las Cruces, NM

10 CLEANEST U.S. CITIES BY YEAR-ROUND PARTICLE POLLUTION:

1. Prescott, AZ
2. (tie) Cheyenne, WY
2. (tie) Farmington, NM
4. Casper, WY
5. St. George, UT
6. Flagstaff, AZ
7. Redding/Red Bluff, CA
8. Duluth, MN/WI
9. Kahului/Wailuku/Lahaina, HI
10. Rapid City/Spearfish, SD





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A black and white photograph of a man performing a handstand against a brick wall. He is upside down, with his hands on the ground and his feet pointing upwards. He is wearing shorts and athletic shoes. The background is a textured brick wall.

1 EXERCISE, 4 SCALES

See an exercise that you can't do on the whiteboard? No problem. Here are four ways, from most challenging to least, to scale it to your current ability level.

THE EXERCISE: HANDSTAND PUSH-UP

LEVEL 4 SCALE: PARTIAL-ROM HANDSTAND PUSH-UP

Place an AbMat and a couple of weight plates stacked on each other (or a book or two if at home) between your hands to limit how far you can lower down. Tap your head on the raised surface, then powerfully press back up.

LEVEL 3 SCALE: FEET-ELEVATED PIKE PUSH-UP

Place your feet up on a plyo box or bench a few feet behind you (hands on the floor) and bend your hips so your torso is nearly perpendicular to the floor and at a 90-degree angle to your legs. Keep your legs straight and core tight as you lower your head to the floor between your hands and press back up.

LEVEL 2 SCALE: PIKE PUSH-UP

From a push-up position on the floor, walk your feet forward so your legs and torso form a V. Keep your butt pointed straight up with your knees extended. Touch your head to the floor at the bottom and reach full elbow extension at the top of each rep.

LEVEL 1 SCALE: HANDS-ELEVATED PIKE PUSH-UP

This exercise is the same as Level 3 but only with your hands elevated and balls of your feet on the floor. Lower yourself down and at a slight angle in front of the elevated surface (bench, box or other raised surface).

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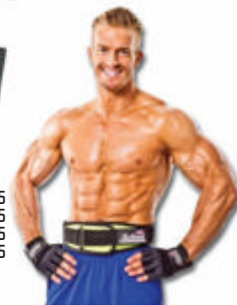
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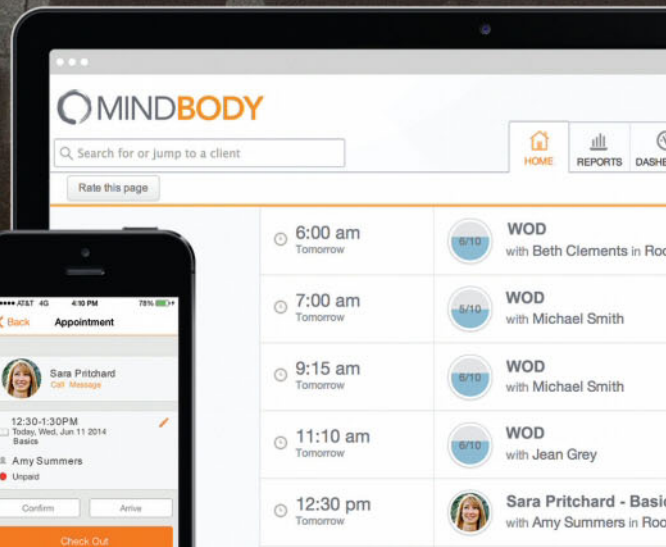
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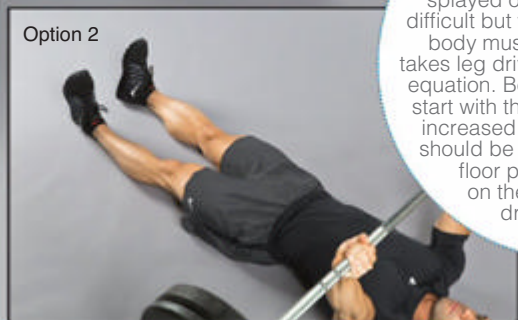
CrossFit has a love-hate relationship with the bench press. Most coaches admit that it's one of the best developers of upper-body pushing strength, but the use of the bench and the prevalence of shoulder injuries in lifelong benchers makes it seem wise to avoid. And from a practical standpoint, bench pressing is tough to program because few boxes want to invest the money or floor space on a half-dozen benches. The solution? Enter the floor press. A brute-strength old-school lift that predates the bench press, the floor press combines the massive recruitment of upper-body muscle fibers with a highly functional movement pattern and a range of motion that makes it much healthier for your shoulders than a traditional bench.

By Mike Carlson, NASM-CPT, CFL-1 • Photos by Robert Reiff



The floor press can be performed with the knees up and feet on the floor or the legs completely splayed out. The latter is more difficult but will recruit more upper-body muscle fibers because it takes leg drive completely out of the equation. Beginners might want to start with their feet on the floor for increased stability, but the goal should be to progress to a strict floor press with the legs on the floor and heels driving into the floor.


Option 2



1 THE SETUP


If you don't have access to a rack or if the lowest holes on your rack are still too high, place a loaded barbell on the ground, scoot under it and glute-bridge it into your hands. If you do have access to a power rack, set the J-cups to about 18 inches off the floor and place the loaded barbell onto them. Get on the floor and line the bar up so that it's at eye level. Once situated, place your hands on the bar where the knurling rings are (or a bit wider if you have long arms). Grasp the bar deep in the web of flesh between your fingers and thumb and wrap your thumbs completely around it.

Athlete: Marco Laterza



2 UNDER THE BAR

Move your shoulder blades together and downward (imagine trying to put them in your back pockets). If the bar is in a rack, slide it off the J-cups so you can maintain this position with your scapulae. (If you can have someone give you a lift off, even better.) Tuck your elbows close to your sides — the angle between your upper arms and your torso should never be greater than 45 degrees. Take and hold a deep breath, tighten the muscles in your abs and glutes and, if the bar is in a rack, slowly bring it down. As it descends, imagine rowing the bar to help activate your lats and improve stability.



3 OFF THE BOTTOM

Let your upper arms make full contact with the floor and come to a complete stop. Don't crash your elbows into the floor and try to bounce the bar the way you might on a bench press. Generating power from a dead stop is the biggest challenge of the floor press, but it's also the key to its benefits. After a beat during which the bar has been completely still, tighten your core, drive your soles or the backs of your heels into the floor and press the weight to full lockout. When you've completed the last rep, lower the weight until your upper arms land on the floor, then rock the weight forward so the bar lands over your hip crease. If you used a rack, lean the bar back until it rests in the J-cups. □



BRINGING THE DEADLIFT TO LIFE

This basic CrossFit movement isn't what athletes think it is.

By Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CFL-1

Ask the majority of athletes how they would categorize “deadlifts,” and more than likely they would classify that movement as a “pulling exercise” and/or “back work.” Well, they're wrong. And that's not the only commonly held misconception about the deadlift. Analyzing the movement and breaking it into its component parts can yield true understanding — and bigger lifts.

GET DEFINED

The deadlift involves hip extension, knee extension and, to some degree, plantar flexion. While other joints move during this exercise, they move passively (i.e., as a result of other joint movements, not actively). The primary movers are the gluteal group, erector spinae, hamstrings and calves.

Synergists, such as the trapezius, biceps and lats, contract isometrically and do not cause movement.

With that understanding, you might observe that those joint actions and primary muscles make it sound like the athlete is doing a squat or leg press. Yes, exactly.

The deadlift is not a pulling exercise; it is a pushing exercise. The difference is not only a function of muscle/joint function but also the athlete's mental approach. You'll see why below.

TECHNIQUE CHECKLIST

Keep these in mind as you approach a deadlift.

- With your feet in the power position (roughly shoulder width), step all the way up to the bar. The setup isn't the same as in the clean or snatch, in which the bar stays over the toes. The bar in the deadlift should be right next to your shin in the start position.
- Sit back so your feet are flat on the floor and your hips are slightly above parallel. Your shoulders should not be in front of the bar like in other lifts but over the bar.
- Mental Orientation No. 1: In your mind's eye, think of your arms as steel rods, starting at your shoulders and ending in steel hooks at the bar. Ergo, you cannot bend your elbows — all the force on the bar is coming from your shoulders through these attached steel rods.
- Mental Orientation No. 2: Now think of yourself in a leg-press machine in which your torso doesn't move and your feet are on a platform. At this point, maintain tight levers and drive your feet through the floor. You're not pulling anything; you are simply pushing down against the floor.
- As the bar breaks away from the floor, keep it in tight. It should essentially drag up your shin, knee and thigh. (Powerlifters often chalk their hands and baby-powder their thighs, so when the bar reaches their thighs, it doesn't grab the skin.)
- Just as the bar attains knee height, it's time for Mental Orientation No. 3: The “floor pushing” ends and the “hip pushing” begins. Think “hips forward.” If your hips move forward, you'll have no choice but to extend at the knees and finish the movement.
- At the top, make sure your shoulders come back to normal position above your hips.

TIPS FOR MAX ATTEMPTS

When a workout calls for a one-rep-max deadlift, remember two things. First, the lower your feet are in the starting position, the higher the bar will be at liftoff, which is a good thing. So even though weightlifting shoes are stable, they have a heel and aren't the best choice. Use flat shoes with little height.

Second, remember that the deadlift is a slow-speed movement. To complete the lift, your acceleration needs to be slightly above zero. Don't be surprised if the bar feels like it's nailed to the floor during a very heavy deadlift. In max attempts, it could take as long as three full seconds for the bar to bend sufficiently so that the weights break free of the floor. Don't give up on it too soon! □

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ATHLETES' EATS

Here's some much-needed clarity for competitive athletes who are fed up with inconsistent performance-nutrition recommendations.

By Elke S. Nelson, Ph.D., CFL-1

Q: Lately, I've become confused and overwhelmed by nutrition advice directed at athletes. I'm not sold on Paleo because I think it's too limited to support peak athletic performance, and my goal is to compete. Are there non-Paleo foods you can recommend for a competitive CrossFit athlete looking to improve performance while sustaining good health?

A: In an ideal world, there would be a perfect diet that equally promotes optimum health and peak performance. In the real world, unfortunately, that diet doesn't exist, which means you must prioritize your goals before choosing the foods that best support them. If your goal is to train and build, you need to fuel adequately and be fully aware that the food choices you're making may not be ideal for your long-term health. Performance-based recommendations for athletes can be divided into two main categories: dairy and starches.

DAIRY

This is probably the most controversial food group eliminated from the menus of people following a strict Paleo diet. But interestingly, some of the reasons that dairy is barred from Paleo make it a recommended food when performance is a priority. For example, dairy is considered to be highly insulinogenic (meaning it induces insulin secretion) and it can activate growth factors — two things that support building and recovery. But not all dairy is created equal. Hard-training individuals trying to build muscle and put on weight can benefit from consuming full-fat dairy from grass-fed cows, which seems to be less problematic and more nutrient dense than the low-fat version.

STARCHES

Many people identify brown rice with health and terms like fiber and low glycemic index, but it may not be the superfood it's chalked up to be. When brown rice is processed for consumption, most of its structural layers remain intact. This does offer enhanced nutrition over white rice but with the potential consequence of exposure to "anti-nutrients" — i.e., potentially inflammatory peptides. For some people, brown "whole-grain" rice can have nasty effects similar to gluten — not to mention reports that rice absorbs more arsenic from the soil than other grains — some varieties of rice were found to contain at least 50 percent more arsenic than the safe limit per serving.

White rice, on the other hand, has been stripped down to endosperm — the carby, energy powerhouse. Many in the Paleosphere actually consider white rice a "safe starch" because it doesn't seem to bother those who consume it and has been shown to have relatively low levels of arsenic. White rice also boasts advantages over brown rice when chasing peak performance because it provides essentially purified carbohydrates, so competitive athletes looking to make gains could benefit by strategically consuming it after workouts. In fact, being a high-glycemic food makes white rice a hero rather than a villain in the context of intense sport, in which stimulating insulin secretion after a workout for purposes of growth is favorable. Think about the common practice of using whey protein and BCAA supplementation to stimulate insulin postworkout — insulin equals building.

As an athlete, if you're going to eat rice, it's because you want and need more carbohydrates, not because you're looking to increase your daily fiber intake or to consume something that digests particularly slowly. White rice (and white potatoes) also can help mitigate weight loss for athletes trying to support training with a diet of "clean" whole foods. This, of course, is in contrast to the average person focusing on optimal health, who wants to avoid huge insulin spikes and limit consumption of carbohydrate-dense foods. □

ELITE ONE **SERIES**

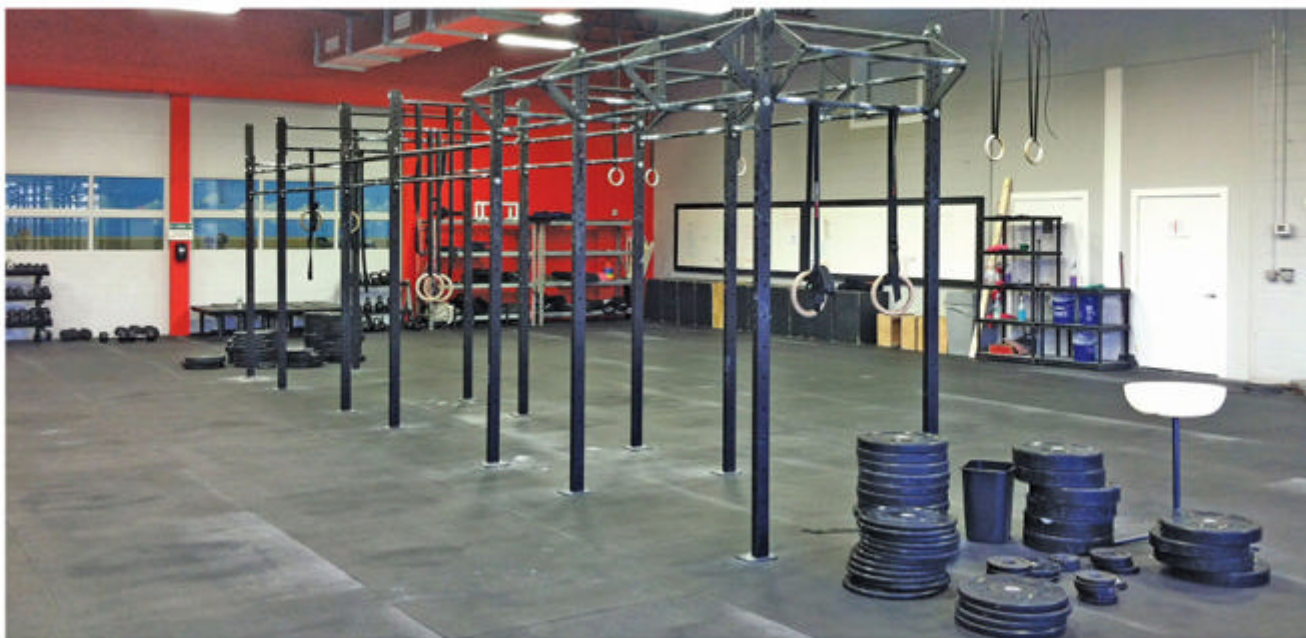
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SALTCITY CROSSFIT

Can a CrossFit gym live harmoniously inside a large commercial health club? Manager Mike Klein says absolutely.

By Joe Wuebben

Your box was previously in a typical location and then moved into a health-club facility. Why the move?

The ownership actually changed. The original owner sold, and the owner of Pacific Health Club in Liverpool, New York, now has the rights to SaltCity CrossFit. But we still have the same name; we're just located and owned by the health club now. It's actually a great situation, once people get over the fact that they have to enter through a health club. *[laughs]*

What makes it a great situation?

Most of our members had dual memberships before anyway. They would have a membership at our CrossFit gym, but at the same time, a lot of them would belong to other places like Gold's Gym or wherever just to have something to do on their off days that isn't as physically demanding as CrossFit. So moving over here was great for them because now they have everything they want under one roof. We have a full lap pool, hot tubs, saunas, rock-climbing wall — all kinds of things. The pool and climbing wall are great for active-recovery days. We also have an indoor track. Being in upstate New York, it's kind of tough for people to maintain their running regimen in the winter. You would normally have to either go outside or force yourself to get on a treadmill. At least the indoor track mixes it up a bit and makes it a little less monotonous. We also have an indoor turf field that's about 50 yards long. We use sleds on it, tires, all that.

Did most of your members from the previous location follow you to the health club?

Yeah, a majority of them did.

What about the people who were already members of the health club? Did you get any of them to sign up for CrossFit?

Absolutely. It was an easy add-on for them. It was only about an additional \$50 per month for existing Pacific Health Club members to add CrossFit.

Do you recommend other available activities at the health club for your CrossFitters, like swimming and rock climbing, or do you let them do that on their own?

It's a little of both. A lot of our members take it upon themselves to go do their own thing, but we definitely make a lot of suggestions for other things they can do on non-CrossFit-training days for active recovery.

Have you noticed any challenges with having different training disciplines (CrossFit, bodybuilding, etc.) all in the same facility? Is it hard to have them all coexist?

It's been a pretty smooth transition. The thing in the beginning was just the change in location, and a lot of our members were like, "Oh, we have to go back to a health club?" They questioned that a little bit, but once they got here, they saw how great the facility was, and now everybody loves it. There are other fitness classes that members can take. A lot of people take advantage of the yoga classes. Those are free of charge to members. There's a spa, so people can get massages. There's pretty much everything here. CrossFit is its own community and we do things different from other training disciplines, but everyone here gets along well. I was a little skeptical coming over here at first, too, but now I think it's great. □

BOX STATS

LOCATION: 604 Old Liverpool Road, Liverpool, NY 13088

YEARS IN OPERATION: 3 (It opened in January 2012, then moved to Pacific Health Club in Fall 2014.)

NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 200

NUMBER OF COACHES: 4

FACILITY SIZE: 5,000 square feet of dedicated CrossFit space; 90,000 square feet total for the health club

MEMBERSHIP FEES: \$120 per month unlimited (including CrossFit classes and full access to all health-club facilities)

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WRAPPING THE PACKAGE

Working out in the wrong underwear is like trying to play basketball in dress shoes. It's not going to feel good, and it probably won't look too pretty, either. Luckily, a new category of performance underwear has hit the market in the past few years — boxers that are comfortable enough to wear all day but provide the compression and support you need for a workout. When you hit the box and do your best Clark Kent quick-change, these boxers will have you feeling like a superhero.

By Mike Carlson, NASM-CPT, CFL-1

Shown: SHRINE BOXERS

Shrine Boxers get their name from the fact that every man thinks his li'l CrossFitter is sacred. Crafted from a combination of polyester and spandex, Shrine Boxers feature a special crotch gusset sewn between the legs to allow mobility without bunching up. Made by CrossFitters for CrossFitters, Shrine is the first brand that allows consumers to custom-design their own waistband. Just wait until the WOD is over to show it off, though.

FIND: shrineboxers.com

PRICE: \$20



Shown: 2(X)IST ELECTRIC MICRO

Designed with a low rise and slightly longer legs, the Electric Micro by 2(X)ist is perfect for the athlete who's more interested in go than show. The nylon-spandex blend helps wick away moisture, while the silicone-embossed microfiber waistband resists riding up whether you're knocking out burpees or squirming through an interminably long meeting. The Electric Micro is available in eight different colors as well as briefs that sport the same material and waistband.

FIND: 2xist.com

PRICE: \$30

**Shown: LULULEMON
STUDIO BOXER**

"It honestly feels like clouds hugging your junk," reads one review of the lululemon Studio Boxer. Sounds good to us. A longtime favorite of CrossFitters, lululemon is known for making high-quality, flattering and nearly indestructible workout gear. These boxers have Lycra added to the trademark fabric blend, so they retain their shape no matter how many times they're washed. Thoughtfully crafted flat seams mean no chafing, while a shaped pouch keeps the stepkids supported and protected. The legs tend to run slim, so if you have some serious squatter quads, consider buying one size up.

FIND: lululemon.com

PRICE: \$32



**Shown:
UNDER ARMOR
MESH BOXERJOCK**

A more breathable version of the classic Under Armor Boxerjock, the Mesh Series boasts improved ventilation to keep your nether regions cool and dry while providing enough support and compression to get you through the toughest workout. The stretchy fabric accommodates mobility in any direction, and anti-odor technology prevents the growth of foul-smelling microbes. Under Armor Boxerjock underwear are available with a 6- or 9-inch inseam.

FIND: underarmour.com

PRICE: \$22



**Shown:
EXOFFICIO
GIVE-N-GO
BOXER BRIEF**

As a testament to the Exofficio Give-N-Go Sport Boxer Brief's comfort and durability, polar explorer Eric Larsen wore them for 53 straight days during his March to May 2014 expedition to the North Pole. Weighing less than 3 ounces, these ergonomic *chones* are breathable, quick drying and are even treated with a special microbe shield that eliminates odorous bacteria. Whether you're deadlifting in your box or cycling through the Alps, these drawers will keep you cool and comfortable.

FIND: exofficio.com

PRICE: \$30 □



CATCHING CROSSFIT



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL MAY
BE TUFFY GOSEWISCH'S BREAD
AND BUTTER, BUT ON THE INSIDE,
HE'S A MAJOR LEAGUE
CROSSFIT FANATIC.

By Lindsay Berra | Photography by Peter Lueders





Gosewisch was 30 years old and had only finally made it to the majors the previous spring. He was thrilled, and so were his parents and his wife, Kyleyn. Also thrilled were the members of CrossFit Tustin in Southern California.

Gosewisch, sick of hitting up his globo gym in the off-season, had begun working out at CrossFit Tustin when his pal Joel Thompson opened the place in 2010. Gosewisch and his wife had just moved from Tempe, where they met at Arizona State, to SoCal, where Kyleyn grew up.

n April 22, 2014, Arizona Diamondbacks' backup catcher James Benjamin "Tuffy" Gosewisch got what he'd been waiting for his whole life: His first big league home run. It was at Wrigley Field in Chicago, in a 9-2 loss to the Cubs, but no matter; it had been a long time coming.

Gosewisch did his first Girl — "Angie" — and was hooked. "One hundred pull-ups, 100 push-ups, 100 sit-ups and 100 squats took me about 20 minutes and ripped my calluses open, and I could barely breathe," Gosewisch says. "But I looked at Joel and said, 'I'll be back tomorrow.'"

And he kept coming back. He fell in love with thrusters and with workouts like "Jackie" (1,000-meter row, 50 thrusters, 30 pull-ups) and the "Lumberjack 20" (20 reps of seven different movements with 400-meter runs in between). He even got his Level-1 certification and coached at CrossFit Tustin in the offseasons before his 2012 and 2013 baseball seasons. The benefits to his game were immediate and obvious.

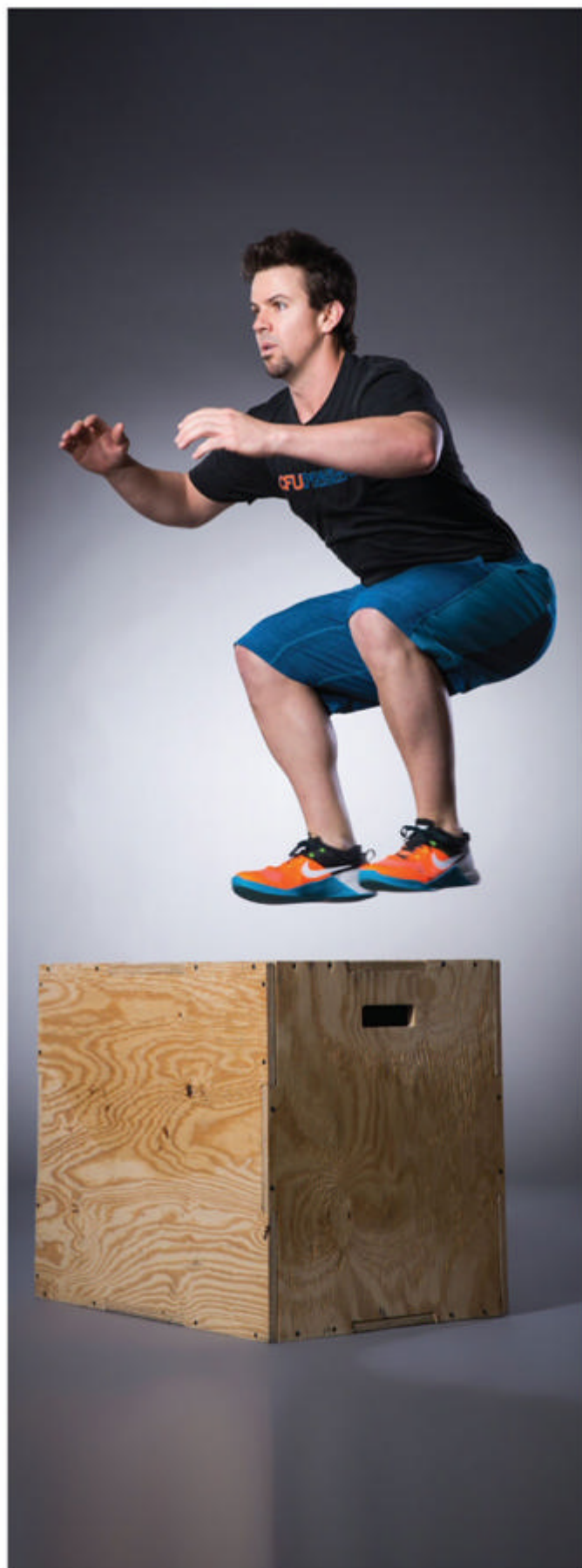
First, there was that increase in power at the plate. But more important to Gosewisch was the increase in strength, explosiveness and durability in his lower half. Gosewisch is a catcher and therefore spends the vast majority of his time in a squat that is well below 90 degrees. "CrossFit has allowed me to become a lot more comfortable in that po-

sition and to be powerful coming out of it," Gosewisch says. "It's also given me a lot more muscular endurance. I have strength and power left in my legs in the ninth inning and throughout the long baseball season."

CrossFit also helped Gosewisch, who is 5 feet 10 inches tall, add extra muscle. He now weighs in at between 200 and 205 pounds, which helps him withstand long days in catcher's gear in the summer heat, along with the other day-to-day rigors of the baseball season, which include getting bowled over by opposing players coming in to home plate with a head full of steam.

The extra brawn helps Gosewisch even more fully live up to the nickname his father gave him when he was just 6 months old. "Apparently, I was kind of a pain in the ass," Gosewisch explains. "I broke a lot of things. I guess I would head-butt things and it didn't affect me." Gosewisch has a few aunts in Illinois who still call him "Jimmy," and some baseball buddies, like Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia and Diamond-

“ TUFFY
GOSEWISCH DID HIS
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‘ONE HUNDRED PULL-UPS, 100 PUSH-UPS,
100 SIT-UPS AND 100 SQUATS TOOK ME
ABOUT 20 MINUTES, RIPPED
MY CALLUSES OPEN, AND I COULD BARELY BREATHE,’
HE SAYS. ”



backs pitcher Josh Collmenter, who call him "James," but for the most part, everyone in his life calls him Tuffy. That includes Kyleyn, who began CrossFitting along with her husband at CrossFit Tustin and now works out regularly at CrossFit Uprising in Phoenix while Gosewisch is playing ball.

During the season, Gosewisch modifies or cuts back on his CrossFit workouts. "It becomes just about maintaining strength as opposed to all-out effort," he says. "If I want to be on the field every day and play, I need to stay fresh. I miss the workouts for sure, but I know once I'm done with baseball, I'll be able to do CrossFit as much

as I want. For now, it's just about being smart." So he reduces his weights and reps and shortens his met-cons, eliminates movements that overly tax his shoulders and supplements with baseball-specific exercises.

"Tuffy doesn't walk on his hands all the time or do vertical push-ups or other things that can negatively affect his ability to swing the bat, but he works hard and he knows his body," says Diamondbacks strength coach Nate Shaw. "He comes to camp in great shape and does all the explosive stuff and the mobility stuff he needs to do. He's great at doing the things he wants to do while also looking at the world through injury-prevention sunglasses because baseball is his livelihood."

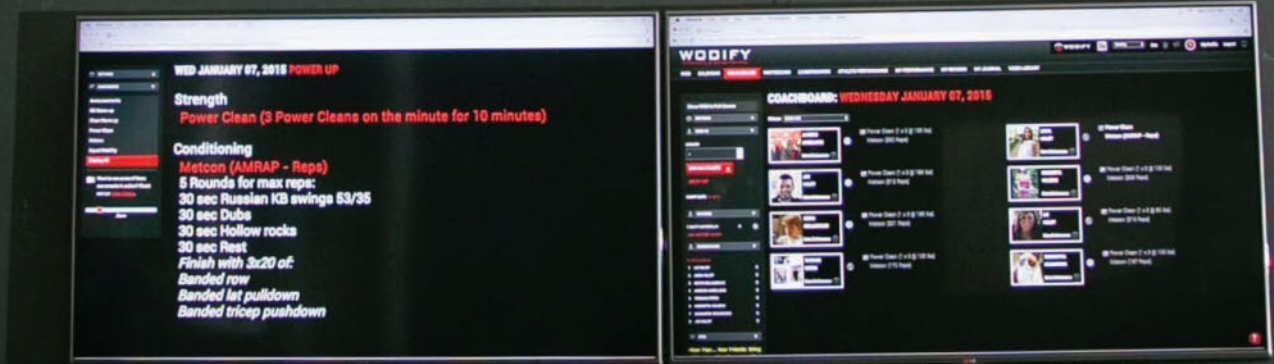
Because CrossFit works so well for Gosewisch and because he's so cautious about the types of workouts he will do and when he will do them, the Diamondbacks don't ask too many questions about what their backup catcher does in his free time.

"People in baseball need to understand CrossFit isn't just about going as heavy as you can," Gosewisch says. "CrossFit teaches you to move better as a human, and that increases your ability to play well in any sport." □

“ DURING THE SEASON,
GOSEWISCH MODIFIES
OR CUTS BACK ON HIS CROSSFIT WORKOUTS.
‘IT BECOMES MORE ABOUT MAINTAINING
STRENGTH AS OPPOSED
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Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Stewart/Arizona Diamondbacks



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FIELDING

WE WON'T SAY CROSSFIT AND BASEBALL GO TOGETHER LIKE CARAMEL CORN AND PEANUTS, BUT THERE SURE IS AN AWFUL LOT OF CROSSOVER BETWEEN THE TWO.

BY LINDSAY BERRA | ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDRIUS KRASUCKAS



George M. Steinbrenner Field in Tampa, Florida, is the spring training home of the New York Yankees. It's not fancy like its marble-and-glass counterpart in the Bronx, New York; the long tunnel that winds its way around the ballpark is all Astro-Turf and exposed concrete block. But outside the Yankees' clubhouse, there is one adornment, added by manager Joe Girardi in February 2013: a set of Rogue wooden gymnastics rings.

Girardi had the rings installed, of course, so he could keep up with his muscle-ups. But their placement out in the hallway is more telling than you'd think; CrossFit is finally beginning to trickle into baseball, but the sport isn't quite ready to totally open the clubhouse doors to a workout regimen the powers that be deem dangerous and controversial.

Baseball, they say, is the only thing since the paper clip that hasn't changed, and while many other professional sports have incorporated CrossFit or CrossFit-style workouts into their programs, baseball has resisted. The overwhelming majority of strength and pitching coaches and athletic trainers in baseball adhere to the old-school mindset that overhead exercise invites shoulder injuries, bench pressing is bad for throwing athletes and squatting below parallel is a no-no.

Ballplayers who want to make the big leagues tend to just do what they're told, but men like Girardi, who was introduced to CrossFit in 2009 by a friend, are opening eyes within the sport. At 50, Girardi looks more fit than he ever did as a player, and despite three herniated disks from a lifetime as a catcher, he's able to do every CrossFit movement. At



JOE GIRARDI

MANAGER | NEW YORK
YANKEES

"As an athlete, you can often lose focus by worrying about who you can compete with, so I compete with myself. I don't want to give into age. I want to keep doing at 50 what I was doing at 47. I want to ski and play basketball and lift weights with my kids for as long as possible. And for the time it takes, there is no more efficient workout than CrossFit to train explosiveness, endurance and mobility."

Photo Courtesy of Andrew F. Kazmierski/Shutterstock.com

FITNESS



**FREDI
GONZALEZ**

MANAGER | ATLANTA
BRAVES

baseball's Winter Meetings in San Diego in early December, former big leaguers Ryan Dempster and Jason Varitek, both two decades Girardi's junior, plodded along on treadmills and raised their eyebrows in astonishment as Girardi completed a CrossFit.com workout at the extraordinarily well-equipped Manchester Grand Hyatt fitness center: 7 x 1 of 65-pound barbell Turkish get-ups.

In the pre-dawn hours of the previous morning, Atlanta Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez led a small band of CrossFitters — two reporters, a team public-relations executive and an Under Armour rep — from the Hyatt to CrossFit Invictus. All wanted to get in a WOD at the famed SoCal training spot. So psyched was the 6-foot-1, 245-pound Gonzalez that he didn't care that hand-stand push-ups and chest-to-bar pull-ups were not exactly his jam, and he

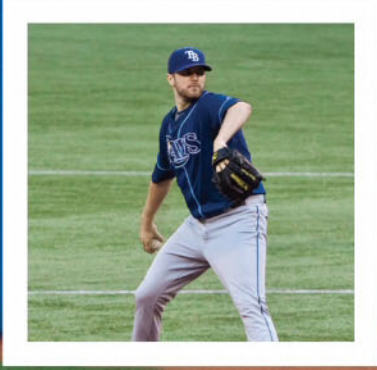
left with a bag of T-shirts.

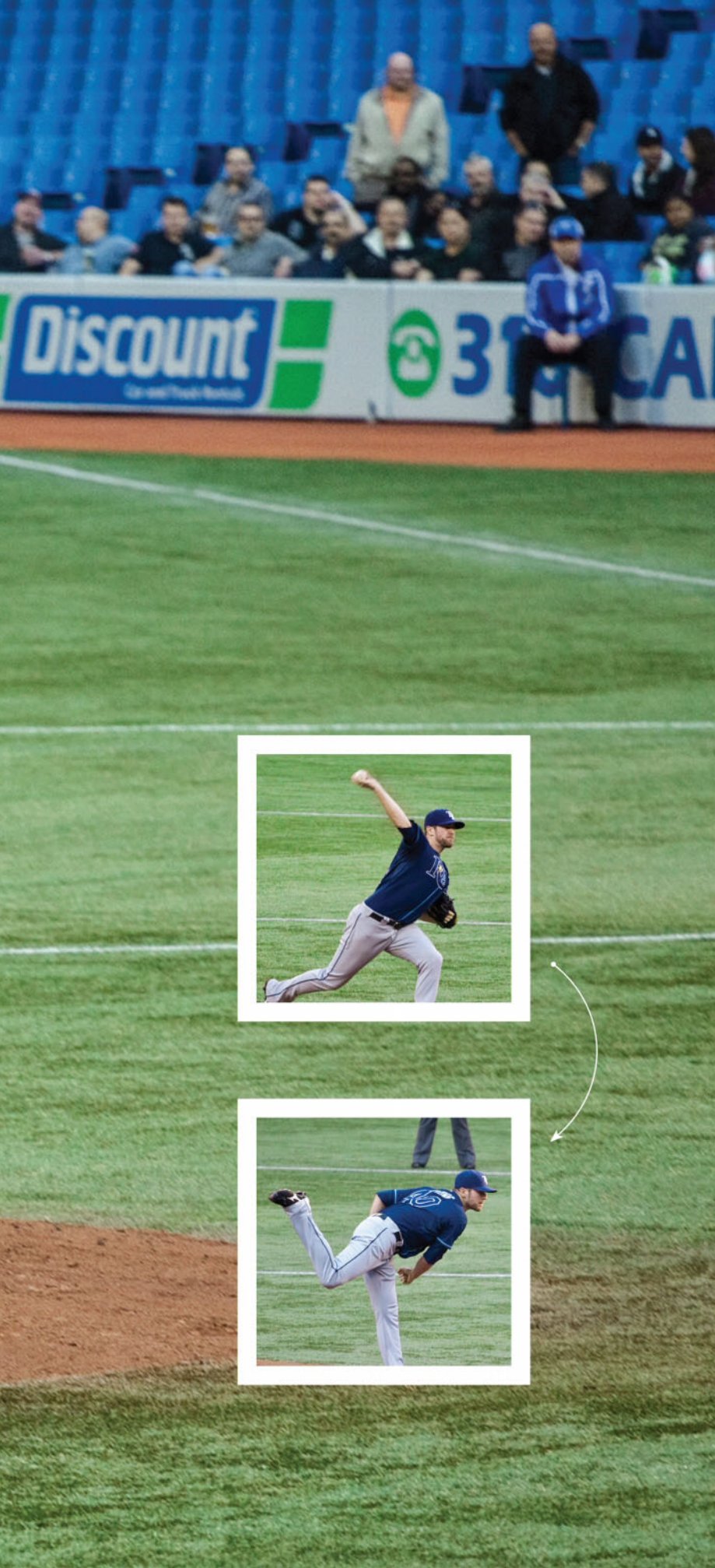
Gonzalez is 51 and, like Girardi, is in the best shape of his life. He began CrossFitting in 2011 with his son, who was preparing to play football at the University of West Georgia, and never looked back.

Both managers say CrossFit fits perfectly into their jam-packed schedules. "I spend a lot less time in the gym than I ever have before, and I'm in as good a shape as I would be if I was spending 90 minutes five times a week," Girardi says. "CrossFit is hard and intense and it's a challenge, and I love it."

Girardi and Gonzalez are the most well-known baseball men who have embraced CrossFit. But many others — strength coaches, retired players, team executives and a handful of active players — are singing its praises to anyone who will listen. Read on for some of their stories.

"CrossFit has made a huge difference for me, especially cardiovascularly. We may not run that much in CrossFit, but every once in a while, there's a 5K in there. That used to terrify me, but now it's no big deal. I'm still 245 pounds, but CrossFit has changed my body. I'm stronger, I have more stamina and my pants are looser. At age 51, I feel pretty good about myself."





WADE DAVIS

PITCHER | KANSAS CITY ROYALS



Royals righty Wade Davis, who was instrumental in his team's 2014 World Series run, is one of the best relief pitchers in baseball. But it wasn't always that way. "I had problems in 2010 and 2011," Davis says. "I could feel myself falling apart, not feeling confident or throwing hard. Then I started Cross-Fit." Davis, 29, began training with Niyam Oladipo at Fit Monster Strength and Conditioning in Montgomery, New York, after his 2011 baseball season. Huge gains in his deadlift and squat (he's nearing a 400-pound back squat), along with improvements in his overall strength and mobility, have contributed to a 10-mph increase on the mound and an increase in his overall durability. "I've lost about 2 percent body fat and put on 7 pounds of muscle," Davis says. "My foundation is so much stronger, and I really feel it on the mound. My feet and legs are more grounded, and I've been stronger and sturdier over the last two seasons."



RICK SLATE

**DIRECTOR OF STRENGTH AND
CONDITIONING | ATLANTA BRAVES**



Big league strength coaches and longtime pals Rick Slate and Paul Fournier got their CrossFit Level-1 certifications together at CrossFit BGI in West Palm Beach, Florida, in 2009. Both do CrossFit workouts themselves and do their best to incorporate the CrossFit methodology into their team programming. "Baseball is a highly specialized sport, so I have to cherry-pick certain workouts and certain movements for certain guys, especially the pitchers," Fournier says. "But we do workouts for time and rounds a lot, incorporating a strength movement and a met-con movement."

Fournier is also in the minority of baseball minds; he believes that baseball players, who throw, catch and dive with their arms over their heads, should not avoid overhead exercise. "They live up there, they have to train up there," he says. "I don't want them going overhead for the first time on the field. I want them in my weight room, duplicating the same conditions they'll be in on the field."

To that end, Fournier has his players do strict pull-ups and handstand holds and some overhead lifts, though he avoids anything too heavy. "You can ruin someone if the load is too heavy or if it's done too frequently or done wrong," adds Slate, who is also working on a kettlebell certification. "There are no bad lifts, only lifts done badly."



PAUL FOURNIER

**MAJOR LEAGUE CONDITIONING
COORDINATOR | PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES**

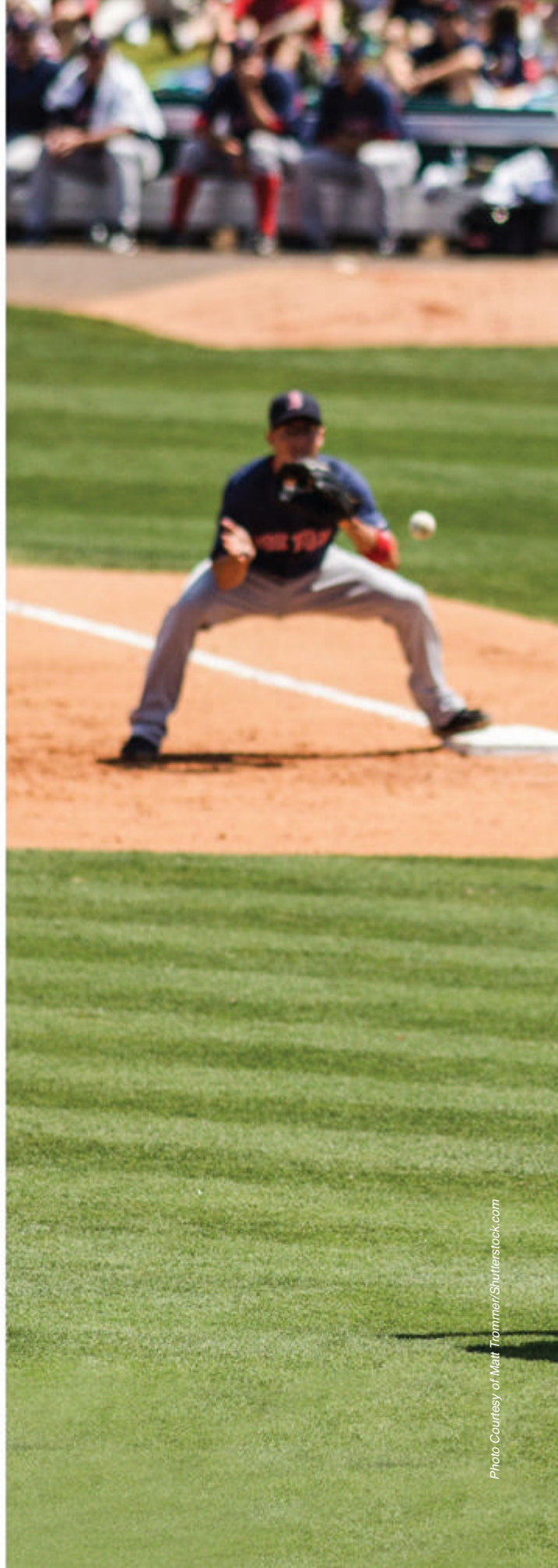


Photo Courtesy of Matt Trommer/Shutterstock.com



JAVIER VAZQUEZ

RETIRED PITCHER



Pitcher Javier Vazquez played for six teams in his 14-year MLB career and never spent a day on the disabled list. He began CrossFit-style workouts in his last year in the big leagues, when he was with the Florida Marlins and Fournier was his strength coach. Vazquez, 38, currently works out at CrossFit Ponce in Puerto Rico and even occasionally competes. "I've always liked to work out; it's just a different level of working out now," says Vazquez, who travels often as a representative with the Major League Baseball Players Association. "When I'm in town, I'm at the box five days a week, and my overall fitness level is much better now than it was when I was playing."




LANCE CORMIER

RETIRED PITCHER |
OWNER, CROSSFIT
CANDOR



Retired relief pitcher Lance Cormier, who spent eight years in the big leagues with Arizona, Atlanta, Baltimore, Tampa and Los Angeles, found CrossFit shortly after he left baseball and currently owns CrossFit Candor in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The 34-year-old wishes he'd found CrossFit while he was still playing. "It would have made me better," Cormier says. "CrossFit makes you a

better athlete. I'm stronger than ever. I haven't gotten hurt. All the stuff we do in CrossFit is quick and explosive, and in baseball, that's what you need, especially if you're hitting or pitching. As a pitcher, you make 100-plus very explosive plays per game, and Olympic lifts and other CrossFit movements train you that way, where the traditional baseball model of doing a long run after you pitch just does not."



BASEBALL IN CROSSFIT

In 2012, CrossFit Games master Dave Castro threw a softball toss into the mix of individual events at the CrossFit Games. Former high school pitcher Spencer Hendel won with a 258-foot 9-inch throw. But he's hardly the only former ballplayer tearing it up in the CrossFit world. Four-time Fittest Man on Earth Rich Froning was a second baseman at Cookeville High School from 2001 to 2005. He opted out of two college baseball scholarships to work at the Cookeville Fire Department while he attended Tennessee Tech University. Alex Rollin pitched for the University of California, Berkeley, then played two seasons of independent baseball before calling it quits. He now competes as a member of Team NorCal CrossFit, which finished fifth at the 2014 Games. Logan Gelbrich, a catcher and author of this issue's Coach's Corner on Page 4, played four years at the University of San Diego, then was drafted by the San Diego Padres and played two seasons in the minor leagues. He competed at the 2011 CrossFit Games as a member of Team CrossFit Los Angeles, then opened his own box, Deuce Gym, in Venice, California, in 2013.



ROB BRANTLY

CATCHER | CHICAGO WHITE SOX



White Sox catcher Rob Brantly began doing CrossFit in 2008, when he was a freshman at the University of California, Riverside. His strength coach was CrossFit guru Josh Everett, who finished third in the 2007 CrossFit Games and second in 2008. After college, Brantly began training at CrossFit Murrieta in Southern California during the offseason and has recently built a home gym in his garage in Temecula. Once he reached the pros with the Miami Marlins in 2012, Brantly, who is 6-foot-1 and was a lean 180 pounds at the time, quickly discovered he needed more mass to survive as a big league catcher. He cut down on his met-cons and began focusing on his strength and gradually increased to 205 pounds.

Brantly believes the extra squatting has also been beneficial behind the plate. "As a catcher, you're constantly squatting below parallel and constantly pushing the limits of the flexibility of your patellar tendons and hip flexors," the 25-year-old says. "Doing a lot of squats below parallel, like we do in CrossFit, opens the hips and increases flexibility. If you don't squat below 90, you never get into the position you'll be in when it's time to play 160 games, and you put yourself at a much higher risk for injury." □



OVER THE TOP

WHY BASEBALL PLAYERS ARE HESITANT TO TRAIN
OVERHEAD — AND WHY CROSSFITTERS SHOULDN'T BE.

By Bob LeFavi, Ph.D., CSCS, USAW, CFL-1 • Photography by Patrick Sternkopf

When it comes right down to it, baseball players are just like any other athlete, right? They need to be strong, agile and powerful, similar to athletes in other sports. But there's one training issue that's not only unique to baseball but also pits highly qualified strength-and-conditioning coaches against one another. This often-contentious debate centers on whether baseball players — and other kinds of athletes — should perform overhead movements.

SHOULDER ANATOMY 101

In order to better assess the ups and downs of this issue, you need to be familiar with how your shoulders are put together. The shoulder is the most flexible joint in the body, largely because of its unique structure. It's formed by the union of the clavicle (collarbone), the humerus (upper-arm bone) and the scapula (shoulder blade). These unions help create two completely separate joints — the glenohumeral (GH) and acromioclavicular (AC) joints — that work in tandem to allow the upper arm to rotate around its axis at the shoulder.

The AC joint, where the end of the clavicle and the acromion process of

the scapula meet, is a gliding, flat joint that allows more movement than would be possible if the shoulder consisted solely of the GH joint. The round head of the humerus and a small depression of the scapula, called the glenoid fossa, join to form the GH joint. Reports about shoulder injuries often include the term “labrum.” That's the ring of cartilage surrounding the glenoid fossa, which forms a cup for the head of the humerus to fit into and acts to broaden the functional size of the socket while maintaining range of motion.

Problems often arise because the glenoid fossa forms a rather shallow socket, which means that the muscles and tendons surrounding it must reinforce the joint and prevent the possibility of dislocation. It's the rotator cuff (made up of four muscles: subscapularis, supraspinatus, teres minor, infraspinatus) that acts to stabilize the shoulder by adjusting the position of the humeral head and scapula during movement, and as such is the chief protector of the shoulder joint. And it's the rotator-cuff muscles that are at the heart of the overhead debate in baseball.

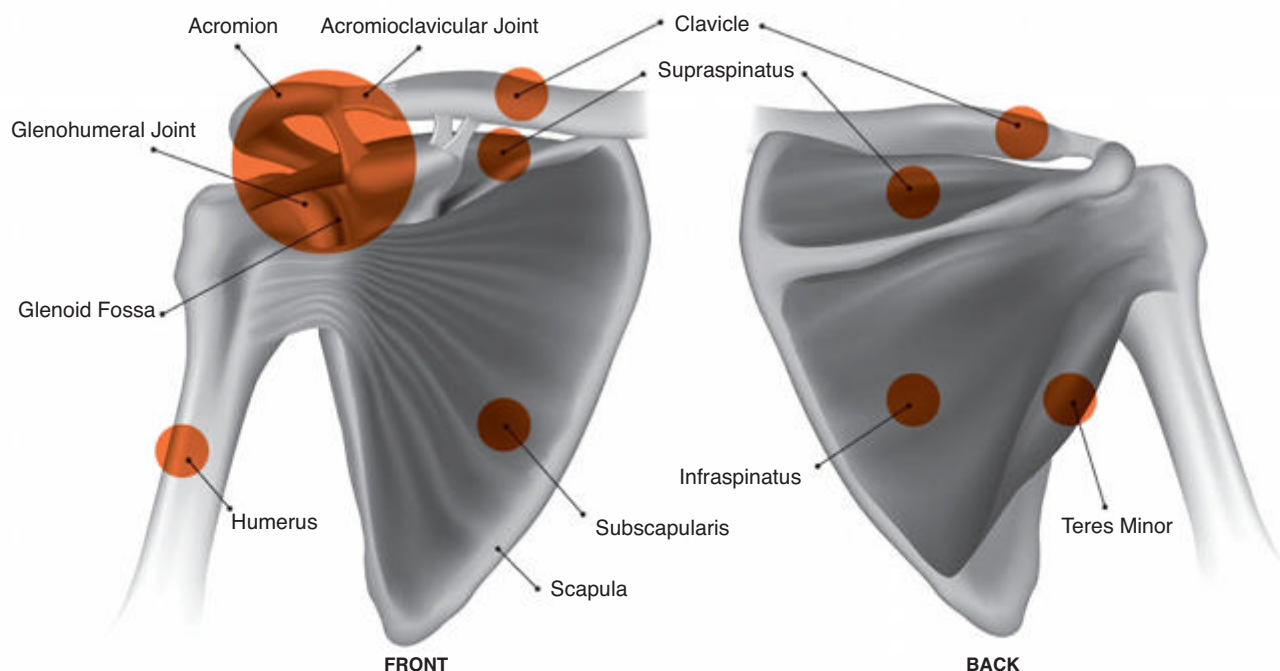
ROTATOR-CUFF VULNERABILITY

The four muscles of the rotator cuff provide two basic functions at the gle-

nohumeral joint. First, they enable movement through multiple planes and rotation of the humerus for optimal shoulder function and arm position. Second, they oppose the actions of the deltoid muscles to stabilize the joint. When an athlete supports weight overhead, the rotator cuff helps maintain downward (compressive force) on the humerus, keeping it tucked into the glenoid fossa. This opposes the deltoid actions, which work to raise the humeral head. Therefore, the rotator cuff protects the humeral head from moving outside its proper position, thereby minimizing the risk of impingement and related injuries.

The primary reason that many baseball coaches give for instructing their players (especially pitchers) to avoid overhead-pressing movements is that they would be especially vulnerable to stress on the rotator cuff. However, the rotator-cuff muscles that are commonly injured (especially in pitchers) are the external rotators — the muscles that rotate the arm backward. Now, if a pitcher whips his arm forward, performing internal rotation at the shoulder, why should those muscles get injured? Because something has to put the brakes on that arm as it performs that violent, fast arc, and it's the opposing muscles — the external

ANATOMY OF THE SHOULDER



rotators — that apply the brakes. Over time, those external rotators weaken and break down.

Ironically, it's the external rotators that are predominantly trained (and trained eccentrically, which is also important) in overhead presses and movements. The bottom line: Regardless of what some strength-and-conditioning coaches believe regarding the rotator cuff and baseball players, you should train overhead. Here's how.

ASSESSING OVERHEAD AND SHOULDER MOBILITY

The first step is to assess your shoulder mobility overhead. Try this common test of functional movement: Stand with your feet flat on the floor and hold a PVC pipe directly overhead. Now, descend into an overhead squat. Optimal mobility, for which the highest score would be given on this movement, occurs when you can keep the bar over your feet, maintain heel contact with the floor and have your hips descend below the horizontal level of the hip joint. In those with compromised mobility, the heels may rise or the PVC pipe may move either too far forward or stay too far behind the body; both positions are problematic and indicative of a shoulder-mobility limitation.

If your shoulder mobility is compromised, you should embark on a sustained program to increase shoulder range of motion. An experienced CrossFit-certified trainer can help you accomplish this goal. Don't labor under the impression that your shoulders can't increase in mobility — the tissues limiting mobility can be stretched. It simply takes a sustained, intentional and smart program, along with effort on your part.

PROPER MECHANICS FOR OVERHEAD MOVEMENTS

Even though we are proponents of training overhead, it's vital to understand the proper mechanics of the movements so as to minimize stress on the rotator cuff. Overhead exercises should be performed in such a way that the head of the humerus can maintain its proper position in the glenoid fossa. This is best accomplished when you start the exercise from the "rack" position (across the front of your shoul-

Kettlebell Turkish Get-Up
START



Athlete: Josh Gallegos at CrossFit Synapse, North Hollywood, CA.



Kettlebell Turkish Get-Up
FINISH

ders). It's also best to use your legs and perform overhead movements (to the extent you can) from a standing position with the exercise initiated by the legs, as in a push press or jerk.

To maintain proper biomechanics for rotator-cuff protection, ensure that the bar follows a pathway that moves in a slight arc in front of your body, around your face as the chin is tucked back slightly (don't throw your head back), and ending with your arms fully extended overhead and in line with your ears. Avoid leaving your arms in front at the end of the movement. That's not the standard for a legitimate CrossFit overhead exercise in a WOD, and more important, such a finishing position places undue stress on the rotator cuff.

Finally, be very careful of rotator-cuff fatigue. Remember, these muscles are small and tire out with repeated activity. Be vigilant about how much volume is included in WODs that feature multiple overhead sets. When rotator-cuff muscles fatigue, the humeral head begins to migrate away from the glenoid because of the strong pull of the deltoids, and the likelihood of injury increases sharply.

STRENGTHENING YOUR OVERHEAD MOVEMENTS

The final step is to train specific exercises that will help you develop overhead strength and stability in overhead movements. Here are three great exercises — some rarely used in CrossFit — that will do just that.

KETTLEBELL TURKISH GET-UP

The Turkish get-up is a more familiar exercise to CrossFitters and is a fantastic exercise to improve overhead movements for two reasons. First, it helps increase strength through a large range of motion and across multiple planes of movement. Second, it's superb for developing midline and core stability, which further transmits rigidity to movements overhead.

To perform, lie on the floor and, holding a kettlebell in your right hand, safely move the kettlebell into a locked-out position over your upper chest. Your right knee should be flexed with your foot flat on the ground and your heel near your buttocks, and your left leg should be straight and slightly



Behind-the-Neck Overhead
Shoulder Press (Snatch Grip)
FINISH





Behind-the-Neck Overhead
Shoulder Press (Snatch Grip)
START

abducted (away from your body). Perform a slight crunch to maneuver up by rolling onto your left hip and elbow. Think of punching your elbow down to the floor. Immediately following the crunch and punch, drive down hard with your right heel and push up onto your left hand, all while threading your left leg underneath you into a kneeling position. At this point, your left knee and right foot should be on the floor and the kettlebell should be locked out overhead. From this position, tighten your core and lunge forward to a standing position. Reverse these steps to return to the start position. Repeat on the other side.

During both the ascent and descent in the TGU, work hard to keep your right arm locked out overhead. You'll expend more energy and fatigue more quickly flexing your elbow even slightly and re-locking it. Also, keep your eyes focused on the kettlebell; this will keep your active shoulder properly aligned for overhead stability and strength.

BEHIND-THE-NECK OVERHEAD SHOULDER PRESS (SNATCH GRIP)

Step up to a rack and, with your hands at snatch width on the bar, position yourself underneath it with the bar on the back of your shoulders, as you would for a squat. With your feet at shoulder width, and without assistance from your lower body, perform a strict press upward and lock out at the top. Remember to squeeze your buttocks and abdominals so your hips stay underneath you and your core maintains rigidity. Return the bar slowly to the back of your shoulders.

Because this isn't a push press or a jerk, the motion should be slow and controlled. As a strength-building exercise (providing the basis for more power and endurance), this movement should be performed between the repetition maximum ranges of three to six. This means that you should rarely perform high-rep presses if your goal is to build strength overhead. An occasional 1RM (absolute "max") is a good idea, as well, to improve your progress with this grip and position overhead.

The use of forced reps should be consistent here, with a spotter standing behind you and assisting at your elbows only at your sticking point. The spotter also can help lower the bar to your shoulders when the weight is in the 1RM-to-3RM range.



OVERHEAD SHRUG

Rack a weight that's slightly heavier than one with which you can successfully perform a push jerk at a height about 2 inches above your head. Make sure the rack is stable, with a good metal "catch" holding the weight. Facing the bar, grasp it with your hands at clean width and bend at your knees to position your body directly under the bar with your arms locked out and shoulders tight. (Make sure to maintain a solid core.) Slowly and carefully straighten your legs; stand up under the weight, keeping your elbows locked out. As you do, the bar may slide up the rack. That's fine as long as your arms stay straight and you move the bar away from the rack to an overhead position once

you're completely rigid under the bar.

Next, while holding the bar overhead and locked out, elevate and depress your shoulder girdle slowly and completely three times. You're essentially performing a shoulder shrug with this heavy overhead bar. Don't bend your elbows or even move at the wrists; just shrug your shoulders.

This exercise increases shoulder-girdle stability and will keep the bar from moving forward through "soft shoulders" in movements like the overhead squat and jerk. In other words, it enables more force production in "active shoulders" to keep them active. As a high-intensity exercise, lockouts should be performed judiciously and not programmed too frequently. And

they should always be done with weight that exceeds your push-jerk 1RM.

Athletes of all kinds — including baseball players — understand that the production of power is one of their key missions. CrossFitters, in particular, must generate high amounts of force rapidly, and the surface we typically work against is the floor. But rather than fearing what could happen when you pit your arms against gravity, we feel you should strengthen those muscles and fully commit to the overhead lifts. □

Dr. Bob LeFavi is a professor of sports medicine at Armstrong State University in Georgia and co-owner of CrossFit Groundspeed. He also competed in the 2013 CrossFit Games, Masters division.



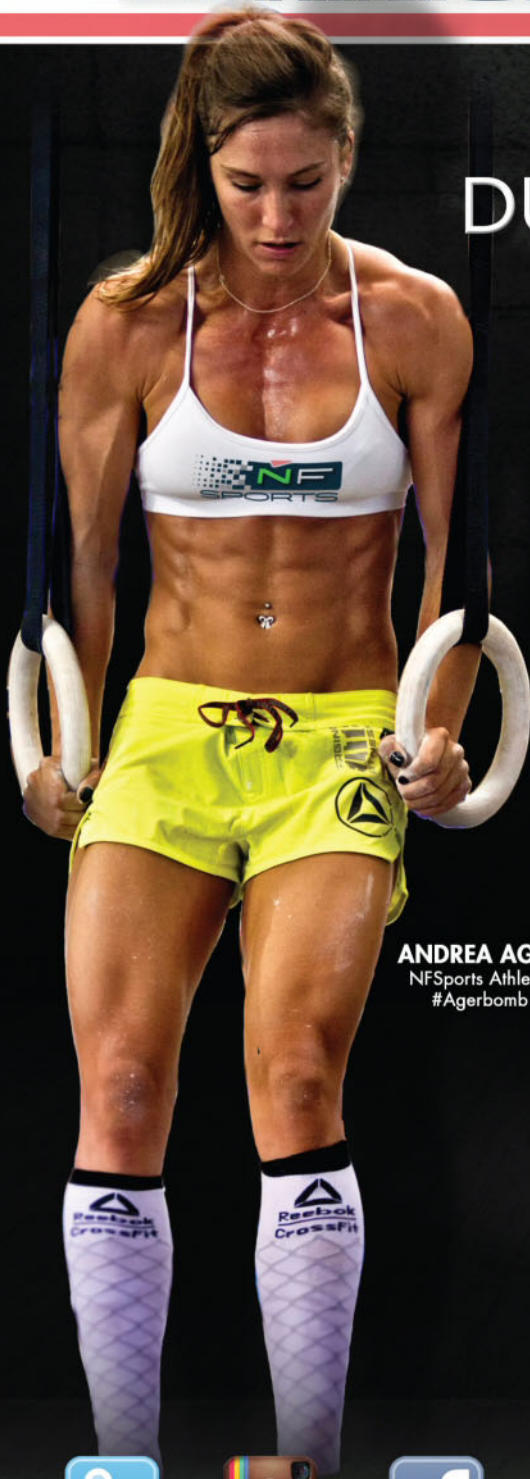
IF YOU'RE DEHYDRATED DURING YOUR WORKOUT, IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE

Once you've become dehydrated, you'll suffer a decline in performance you won't get back by simply replacing electrolytes. Even worse, most people don't realize they **may not be absorbing much of the water** they're drinking if it's on an empty stomach[†].

Balanced Hydration is an electrolyte drink for **beginners, youth athletes, weekend warriors, runners, cyclists, weightlifters and professional athletes** to be consumed throughout the day when you would normally drink your water. Promoting hydration long before the workout may improve recovery, performance and **decrease the need for high sugar electrolyte drinks during the workout**[†].

*Inspired by revolutionary physical therapist and best-selling author
Kelly Starrett*

ANDREA AGER
NFSports Athlete
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[†] These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

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THE BOX | APRIL/MAY 2015 | UNUSUAL FOODS

UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

*ARE YOUR PALEO PICKS STARTING TO FEEL
PLAYED OUT? — THESE INTERESTING AND
HEALTHY OPTIONS MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT
YOUR PLATE NEEDS.*

BY MATTHEW KADEY, MS, RD

Admit it ... whenever you stroll through the grocery store, one or two foods make you scratch your head. Sure, they may look interesting, but you haven't quite had the guts to toss them in the grocery cart.

Next time, though, you may want to reconsider because embracing your culinarily adventurous side can pay off big time. Not only can experimenting with new foods break you out of the dietary doldrums, but giving salmon and almonds the day off by replacing them with other healthy alternatives can bring a new host of nutrients into play in your system. Here are eight foods to consider munching on at least occasionally for a rut-busting change of pace.



HEMP SEEDS

Hemp may bring to mind peace, love and tie-dye, but the seeds the infamous plant produces are a surprising source of fuel, too. With an addicting flavor reminiscent of pine nuts, totally legal hemp seeds (also known as hemp hearts) provide more protein — about 10 grams in a 3-tablespoon serving — than other seeds, including sunflower, flax and pumpkin.

What's more, scientists in Canada recently discovered that the "protein digestibility-corrected amino-acid score" (i.e., the protein value of a food) of hemp is greater than that found in most grains, nuts and legumes. This makes hemp seeds a valuable, highly digestible plant-based source of essential amino acids.

The nutritional punch of hemp seeds also includes anti-inflammatory omega fatty acids and a range of other nutrients, including magnesium and iron.

FIND THEM:

Most natural food stores and some larger supermarkets carry bags of hemp seeds, or you can load up online at manitobaharvest.com.

TRY THEM:

Add ultra-versatile hemp seeds to your oatmeal, yogurt, cottage cheese, protein shakes, soups and salads.

FIND THEM: Adzukis are available at grocery and specialty food stores.

TRY THEM: Like other beans, adzukis are sold in cans, but for the best flavor and texture, opt for the dry beans. Simply soak them overnight, drain and then boil them in a pot of water until tender, about 45 minutes. Use them in salads, soups, tacos, stews, chili and even dips.

ADZUKI BEANS

When it comes to beans, the classics — kidney beans, black beans and garbanzos — come to mind first. But there are many other varieties worth exploring, adzuki being one of them.

These tiny reddish-brown beans have a naturally sweet, nutty flavor, making them less “earthy” tasting than other legumes. Adzuki beans offer a smorgasbord of vitamins and minerals plus plenty of plant-based protein and off-the-chart levels of dietary fiber. Eating plenty of high-fiber fare like adzuki beans can help improve blood-sugar control and quash cravings for sweets.



FIND IT: Look for halloumi in Middle Eastern markets or the better-stocked supermarket cheese aisles.

TRY IT: Place 1-inch slices of halloumi on a grill or in a skillet and cook for about two minutes per side. You can simply season the cheese (try olive oil, lemon juice and fresh herbs) and eat like you would a hunk of meat or add it to cooked grains, scrambled eggs, tacos, salads or sandwiches for an extra shot of protein.

HALLOUMI

It's time to think beyond mozzarella. Halloumi is a briny sheep- and goat-milk cheese hailing from Cyprus. For each 1-ounce serving, you'll obtain about 6 grams of top-notch dairy protein to keep your body well-fed with performance-promoting amino acids.

A unique feature of halloumi is that it has a higher melting temperature than other cheeses, so slabs can be pan-seared or grilled much like you would meat. The outside becomes deliciously caramelized and crispy, while the inside softens.

MACKEREL



Perhaps the expression “holy mackerel” comes from the impressive nutritional profile of this often-overlooked fish. With mackerel, like salmon, you’ll reel in healthy amounts of omega-3 fatty acids. Beyond the fats’ famed role in fending off coronary woes, research suggests that they can help stimulate muscle protein growth and help quell postworkout muscle pain.

Other perks of the rich-tasting and meaty flesh include plenty of protein and vitamin D. A recent study published in the journal *Clinical Endocrinology* reported that men with the highest blood vitamin D levels also had significantly higher testosterone. And the more testosterone you have flowing in your system, the easier it becomes to beat those PRs.

FIND IT: You can get mackerel at your local fresh-fish counter, whether in the grocery store or specialty butcher shop.

TRY IT: Most fresh mackerel is sold whole with its entrails already removed. To cook it, simply stuff the cavity with any seasoning that pleases you, such as sea salt and sliced lemon, and then grill or pan-fry for about 10 to 12 minutes, flipping once halfway. A good fishmonger will also slice up mackerel fillets for you if you ask nicely. Also, look for smoked mackerel, which can instantly make sandwiches, dips or salads better.



COCONUT BUTTER

Savvy Paleo-philes already know how to make food taste more like a tropical vacation. For the rest of you, we’re here to spread the news about coconut butter. This nut butter is made by puréeing coconut flesh into a buttery consistency, whereas coconut oil is produced by pressing oil from the flesh. Research is continually calling into question the long-held belief that saturated fat like that found in coconut is a dietary thug. In fact, some saturated fat is required to keep hormone levels humming, and lauric acid, the predominant form of saturated fat in coconut, appears to have strong anti-bacterial properties. There is also some evidence suggesting that the unique medium-chain fats present in coconut butter can charge up fat burning and help encourage a better buff-to-blubber ratio.

FIND IT: Look for coconut butter in health food stores or online at nutiva.com, where it’s called “manna.”

TRY IT: Beyond spreading it on toast, rice cakes or crackers, coconut butter can be blended into protein shakes, spread on apple slices or stirred into your simmering quinoa flakes. Also, give roasted sweet potatoes tropical flair by topping the spuds with some coconut butter.

FIND THEM:

Check your local natural food store.

TRY THEM:

Add handfuls of microgreens to your sandwiches and salads.

MICROGREENS

CrossFitters can't live on protein alone, which is why vegetables are a dietary must. You can go one better with microgreens. The baby version of vegetables like broccoli, radish and cabbage contain even higher levels of important nutrients, including vitamins C and E, than their mature counterparts, reports a recent study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.

Microgreens provide a nutritional bonanza because they're harvested after one to two weeks following germination, a period when they're particularly rich in the nutrients they need to grow.



FIND IT: Most well-stocked butchers will carry fresh or frozen game hens.

TRY IT: Roasting a whole Cornish hen is much more manageable than a mature chicken or giant turkey. Place a bird in a large baking dish breast side up and tie the legs together with twine. Tuck the wing tips underneath. Brush the bird with some oil and season with salt and black pepper. Roast at 400 degrees for about 55 minutes, or until the meat is cooked through. Let rest 15 minutes before slicing. You also can use the cooked meat in sandwiches, soups and salads.

CORNISH GAME HEN

Diminutive Cornish game hens prove great things can come in small packages. Cornish hens are basically small, immature chickens weighing 2 pounds or less, making them almost a single-serving bundle of protein. A whole bird delivers about 50 grams of protein.

You'll also reap the rewards of health-boosting zinc and selenium, a potent antioxidant that may help you recover better from a tough workout.

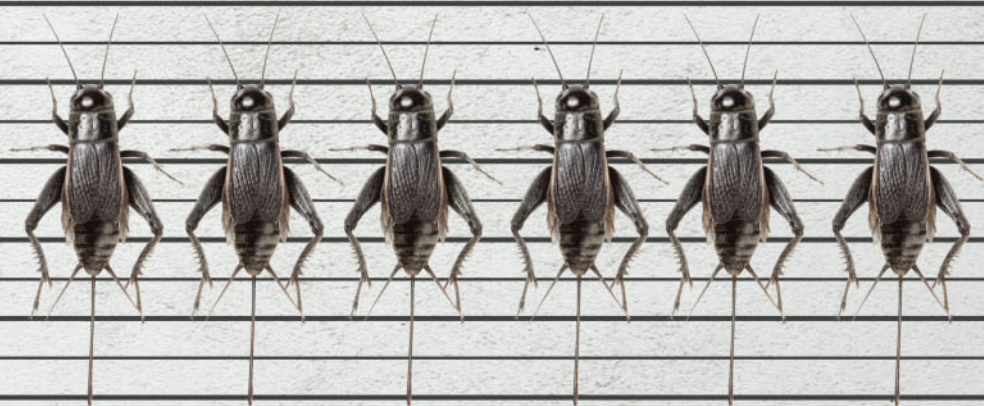
QUINOA FLAKES



Guess what, grain-phobes! It's time to start your day with a little South American (grain-free) influence. Gluten-free quinoa flakes are made by steaming and then passing whole quinoa seeds through rollers to flatten them. This makes them cook much faster than regular quinoa without altering their nutrition content. Each $\frac{1}{3}$ -cup serving contains 5 grams of protein and 3 grams of fat-fighting fiber, and the flakes are also laced with iron to help energize your training efforts. □

FIND THEM: These days, you can find quinoa flakes in most grocery stores.

TRY THEM: For a hot cereal, add 1 cup quinoa flakes and a teaspoon of cinnamon to 1 cup of simmering water; stir regularly until creamy in texture. Also, sneak quinoa flakes into pancake batter or try toasting them in a dry skillet and then sprinkling them into yogurt or cottage cheese for a nutritional upgrade.



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AND ... CRICKETS?

Move over whey and soy — there's a new protein making its way into your energy bars. Recently, a number of companies like Chapul and Exo have been grinding up crickets (yes, seriously ... crickets) and working them into packaged bars for a shot of sustainable protein.

It's not as crazy as you may think, considering that numerous cultures around the world nibble on insects as a source of nourishment, which the World Health Organization encourages in the face of booming human populations. In fact, insect protein contains a full arsenal of amino acids, making it particularly friendly to bodies that work out hard. Once combined with other ingredients like nuts, dried fruit and cocoa, no detectable buggy flavor remains. Or pick up a bag of your very own nutty-tasting cricket flour at bittyfoods.com and put some chirp into your pancakes and muffins.

FRIED EGGPLANT

Despite conventional belief, Paleo doesn't always have to translate to meat overload. This healthy entree is sure to have vegetarians and carnivores coming back for more.

BY ELKE S. NELSON, PH.D., CFL-1 | PHOTO BY ROBERT REIFF





Food Styling: Sandra Cordero

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup arrowroot flour
- ½ cup almond flour
- 1 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon basil
- ¼ teaspoon oregano
- 2 large organic eggs
- 3 tablespoons coconut ghee (substitute coconut oil, ghee or grass-fed butter), divided
- 1½ teaspoons garlic, minced and divided
- 2 medium eggplants (about 1.75 pounds), ends discarded, peeled and thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS

Combine dry ingredients in a medium bowl. In another bowl, beat eggs with a splash of water. Add 1 tablespoon of coconut ghee and ½ teaspoon of minced garlic to a saute pan and place on the stove-top over medium heat. Gently shake the pan to evenly distribute the oil and garlic. While the pan is heating, move your sliced eggplant and two bowls close to the stove. In an assembly-line fashion, individually dip each slice of eggplant first into the egg mixture and

then into the dry mixture, before transferring to the pan. Continue doing this until the pan is lined with one layer of sliced eggplant and isn't too overcrowded. After about five minutes, flip the eggplant slices; they should be golden brown but not burnt. Continue to cook another three to five minutes before removing and transferring to parchment paper to cool. Add another tablespoon of coconut ghee and ½ teaspoon of garlic to the pan and repeat your assembly line, first coating the eggplant and then creating a layer in the pan. After the second batch is cooked and removed to cool, repeat this same process a third time. Note: The number of batches you have will vary depending on the size of your pan. Serves 5.

SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve fried eggplant with your favorite tomato sauce or, for a protein boost, top with meat sauce.

NUTRITION FACTS

(per serving): 247 calories, 6 grams protein, 24 grams carbs, 7 grams fiber, 16 grams fat

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COMMUNITY SPIRIT **CROSSFIT FACES**

Personal expressions of CrossFit from around the globe.

BY MIKE CARLSON, NASM-CPT, CFL-1

CROSSFIT DIVINE MERCY FITNESS

Over the past several years, Catholic priests have become a bit of a punchline in secular society. But Steve Smith, owner of CrossFit Divine Mercy Fitness in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, believes the sacrifice that priests make and the time they devote to their communities are no laughing matter.

"These men live their lives to help us be better people," Smith says. "Most of them, especially Catholic priests, don't make any money at all, and they're on call 24/7. A lot of times, they neglect their fitness. I want to provide a way to make it easier for them to make that a part of their life."

That's why Smith subsidizes gym memberships for priests and seminarians (those studying to be priests but who haven't yet taken their vows). Smith is a devout Catholic, but his offer extends to all men and women of the cloth, not just those who share his faith. "Right now I have four priests, and in the past, I have had two pastors from nondenominational churches," he says.

The spirituality on display at CrossFit Divine Mercy Fitness isn't enough to scare anyone off, Smith says. There's a cross and a few icons on the walls, and each WOD begins with a short prayer, led by Smith or one of the priests in class. Often, the members will offer intentions for the workout — to undergo the pain of the WOD for someone who is sick or struggling, for example — much like other boxes do for Hero workouts. "We're a little different, though," Smith says. "There's not a lot of cursing, and guys are very respectful of gals. Not to say they aren't at other boxes, but it might be a little more dignified here. I think that just happens naturally with our atmosphere."

For many of the priests, the workouts are some of the few hours of the week they can devote to themselves. All have expressed satisfaction with their results: increased energy and stamina, enhanced athletic prowess, being able to pres-



ent the image of a strong and powerful man of faith to their congregation.

The connection between physical activity and a higher power has been noted for eons across many different faiths. Buddhists have a tradition of walking meditation, and long-distance runners often discuss the doors that open up in their brains and hearts when the endorphins are flowing. "The body and spirit are intimately connected," Smith says. "If your body is getting sick and your health goes down the drain, it can be hard to keep up your spiritual life. There's a connection between the body and the soul."

The phrase "divine mercy" comes from the teachings of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun whose message was a simple one: Love God and let that love flow to those in need. Those aren't just idle words to Smith, who opens his doors to clergy at a time when he's still struggling to grow his business. His generous spirit is a real-world example of divine mercy.

ANDRE VAN DER MERWE

"You have to get your ass out of bed and into the box, and then you're done. That's the biggest hardship, just to get to the box," Andre van der Merwe says.

This advice could apply to just about any CrossFitter, but van der Merwe is speaking to a group of people close to his heart — those suffering from obesity. Before he began CrossFit, the 28-year-old publishing professional weighed more than 275 pounds at a height of 5 feet 7 inches. Since beginning his CrossFit journey in June 2013, van der Merwe has lost 90 pounds and counting. While CrossFit is sometimes portrayed as a group of vain fitness elitists, van der Merwe's story represents the kind of common, open-armed inclusiveness the community extends to even the most unlikely participants.

The fact that van der Merwe fell into CrossFit at all is a minor miracle. He lives in Namibia, a country in southern Africa with a population of just 2.2 million. When he first walked into CrossFit Plus 264 (named after Namibia's international dialing code), it was the only box in the country. (There are now two.) A friend who was also battling weight issues suggested they try CrossFit together. "She heard about it on Facebook, so she phoned up Max [Meyer], the co-owner of the gym, and asked, 'Do you take fatties?'" van der Merwe says with a laugh.

Meyer, who is also head coach, and his staff instantly embraced the newcomers. Having done little more in a gym than the exercise bike, van der Merwe was shocked by how difficult he found the On Ramp classes. But the vibe at CrossFit Plus 264 helped him persevere. "When you're overweight, you are really self-conscious when you walk into a CrossFit gym," van der Merwe says. "You see all these fit people and you feel so fat. You think, *Maybe I don't belong here?* But the community is so supportive. When you get to know the people, you realize that

they only have the best intentions for you."

After three months, van der Merwe hadn't lost a pound and began to feel dejected. His coaches and box-mates told him to just keep working. He also cleaned up his diet, and at six months, he had dropped a considerable amount of weight. By the one-year mark, he was down more than 45 pounds.

In Afrikaner culture, meals center on meat but also include lots of pasta, bread, rice and potatoes. When van der Merwe, a self-proclaimed sugar addict, shied away from these staples and included more vegetables and salads with his protein, his weight loss shifted into overdrive. That in turn kick-started his progress in the gym. When he started CrossFit, van der Merwe couldn't perform a single pull-up. Today, he can knock out 15 strict pull-ups and close to 50 kipping. His next goal is to lose the last few pounds so that he can really start to see some muscle definition. He's in no hurry, however. As unlikely as it once was, CrossFit has become a part of his life.

"You don't get fat in 18 months," he says. "It took me a good 27 years, so I'm not going to lose it all at once." □



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WOM

PATTERNED POWER

Get ready to work through multiple planes in this power-focused workout from CrossFit Tactical Strength.

By Eric Velazquez, CSCS

THE WORKOUT

For Time:

21 hang power cleans (135/95 pounds)

21 pull-ups

Row 21 calories

15 hang power snatches (135/95 pounds)

15 pull-ups

Row 21 calories

9 thrusters (135/95 pounds)

9 pull-ups

Row 21 calories

DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Technical: 8
Metabolic: 8
Volume: 6
Strength: 7
OVERALL: 7.25

CLASSIFIER

Firebreather: 7:30-8:59
Excellent: 9:00-11:29
Good: 11:30-14:14
Fair: 14:15-16:00

SCALE IT: "To scale, use lighter weight on the barbell movements or use the muscle clean-and-snatch variations to reinforce hip drive and turnover," Shefferly says. "Also, scaling down the entire volume is an option to keep it in the time domain you are looking for."

"The first 21s are no big deal other than a little bit of grip fatigue." So says WOM architect Anthony "Thor" Shefferly. Like many WODs, however, humble beginnings can quickly devolve into a soul-rending walk on the tired side.

Shefferly's routine includes a seemingly innocuous total of 45 pull-ups and 63 calories on the ergo rower, but these benchmarks are woven into a patchwork of power movements and (sigh) a short set of thrusters. Nary a muscle group is missed in this WOD, which places high demand on the ability to push through pain.

"An athlete who completes this workout demonstrates the ability to move an external load in three different movement patterns and the gymnastics strength to move his own bodyweight through space with the pull-ups," Shefferly says. "Rounding it all out with a 21-cal row really amps up the metabolic capacity needed."

COACH SAYS

1. FIGHT THROUGH THE 15: "Get your head right coming off the rower to at least do sets of five, and focus on hip drive and punching the snatches out hard," Shefferly says. "This is also where game planning comes in to this met-con. Each time you set the bar down, you lose a minimum of seven to 10 seconds to transition the bar back up. Personally, I would push through as far as possible on the snatches and then try to recover on the pull-ups."

2. FRAN-TIC: "The last segment is just a mini-'Fran.' It's the end of the line, so hold on tight because the train may start coming off the tracks," Shefferly says. "After that, get back to the rower as fast as you can and make every pull count. Every pull should equal 1 calorie. Don't

have any unnecessary strokes or it will burn you out bad."

3. GET UNDER: "On the snatches and cleans, get under the bar! Avoid the muscle clean and snatch variations even though they're faster," Shefferly says. "Taking the extra time to pull yourself into a good power position will save effort even though it takes a hair longer." □

Anthony Shefferly, CFL-2, is a USA Weightlifting sports performance coach and co-owner of CrossFit Tactical Strength (crossfittacticalstrength.com). He finished 16th at the 2012 Central East Regionals and is a full-time officer and SWAT team member with the Fort Wayne, Indiana, Police Department.

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